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The Social Activity of Young Bilingual Writers in a Two-Way Immersion Classroom: "¡Oye Victor! ¡Voy a hacer un libro de ti!"

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The Social Activity of Young Bilingual Writers in a Two-Way Immersion Classroom“¡Oye Victor! ¡Voy a hacer un libro de ti!”

by

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving parents, Hugo and Magda Rodríguez.

Acknowledgements

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.
Philippians 4:13

I must have been about nine years old when I stumbled upon my father's dissertation. While I was too young to fully understand what it was, I knew that it was something special. As I flipped through the pages of his dissertation I asked him, "Could I write a dissertation when I'm older?" Smiling he said, "Sure! Of course you can. You're Big Sister!" These words have been my mantra the last couple of years. They pushed me through my writer's block. They motivated me when I wanted to quit. They brought a smile to my face when I wanted to cry from exhaustion. Thanks for always having faith in me Papi! I could not have done this without you. ¡Te quiero mucho!

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researcher. I can't thank you enough! Dr. Schallert, thank you for your thoughtful questions and your feedback during my proposal meeting. They helped shaped this dissertation in very important ways.

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The Social Activity of Young Bilingual Writers in a Two-Way Immersion Classroom: "¡Oye Victor! ¡Voy a hacer un libro de ti!"

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This qualitative research study built on the existing research on young children's composing. Although many researchers have examined the social nature of young children's composing, there is little to no research that has focused on the social work of young bilingual children who are learning to write in two languages. This study explored the social activity of bilingual kindergarten writers in a two-way bilingual immersion program. Specifically, it examined (a) the face-to-face interactions of young bilingual writers, (b) the ways in which children's interactions related to the written/drawn products that were being created at the writing center and during journal time and (c) the oral language that was being used as children engaged in writing activities.

Data were collected for five months in a two-way immersion classroom in South Texas school district. Data sources, including expanded field notes, video recordings of students' interactions, written/drawn artifacts and informal interviews with the students and the teacher were analyzed using the constant comparative method and

microethnographic discourse analysis. Analysis revealed that bilingual children's interactions were varied and complex. As they explored written language alongside their peers, the young writers in this study navigated through multiple peer worlds that were defined in part by the language and/or languages that were being spoken. In order to participate in these worlds the children had to draw on their entire linguistic repertoire, as well as differentiated social understandings that are unique to bilingual individuals. As children attempted to initiate interactions with their peers, they assumed the role of linguist; they made purposeful decisions about how and when they used both of their languages. Factors that influenced children's oral language use included comfort level, peer culture and the out-of-classroom context. Also noteworthy is that these children drew on both languages to support their biliteracy learning. Both Spanish dominant children and those children who were balanced in their language use drew on their Spanish orally to support their writing in English while English dominant students tapped into their Spanish speaking capabilities to support their writing in English.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

A group of kindergarten students in a two-way bilingual immersion classroom in South Texas are writing in their journals one February morning. On this particular day, the target language is English. However, three students, Lourdes, Alex and Leonardo (all pseudonyms) are conversing in Spanish as they work diligently on their compositions. Lourdes, who is writing about playing hide-and-seek with her family, has just drawn her brother climbing up a ladder. Without missing a beat, Lourdes taps Alex and begins to explain what she has drawn. In Spanish she says"…mi hermano agarro una ***ladder*** *y mi hermano se subió." Alex does not ignore Lourdes' language mixing. He responds to it directly by asking, "Verdad que no se llaman* ***stairs****?" Leonardo, who has been listening to his peers' conversation, steps in and tries to correct them by saying, "Se llama escalera." However, Lourdes rejects his statement and insists that the word that best describes the object she has drawn is the English word "ladder." Leonardo disagrees and tells Lourdes,"No. Se llaman* ***steps.*** *" Frustrated, Lourdes exclaims, "No Leonardo. Tu no sabes ingles!"*

The important role that social interaction plays in young children's composing is well documented (e.g., Bomer & Laman, 2004; Daiute & Dalton, 1993; Dyson 1989, 1992, 1993, 2000; Larson 1999; Rowe, 1994, 2008). However, this vignette raises many questions about the face-to-face interactions of young writers in a two-way immersion classroom and the complex ways in which bilingual children use both English and Spanish as they begin to explore written language alongside their peers.

There are different kinds of bilingual education programs that serve the more than five million English language learners enrolled in U.S. schools.[1] A two-way immersion program (also known as dual language immersion, two-way bilingual or bilingual immersion) is a form of bilingual education that integrates students from two distinct linguistic backgrounds for academic instruction that is presented separately through two languages in order for students to become bilingual, biliterate, and to develop multicultural competencies (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). To achieve these goals, two-way immersion programs adhere to a specific set of guidelines that include a proportionate number of students from each linguistic group, separation of languages for instruction and the establishment of a strong language policy that encourages students to use the target language. As a former bilingual education teacher, I have always been intrigued by two-way bilingual immersion education. Unfortunately, I never had the opportunity to witness what Palmer (2004) describes as "the magical, messy day-to-day of students sharing the burden of learning one another's languages" (p. 1). This dissertation study provided me with the opportunity to experience the daily functioning of a two-way immersion classroom. Specifically, I was able to observe the complex nature of young bilingual students' interactions as they begin to explore language, both written and oral, in their classroom.

[1] According to the U.S. Department of Education, the number of English language learners enrolled in U.S schools has increased substantially in the past ten years. During the 2005-2006 academic school year, there were an estimated 5 million Limited English Proficient (LEP) students enrolled in pre-k-12 public school, demonstrating more than a 57% increase between 1995-1996 and 2005-2006.

The Evolution of Early Childhood Literacy

Over the years, researchers interested in young children's literacy development have framed their research using diverse theoretical perspectives. For instance, the dominant perspective on early childhood literacy development from the 1920s to the 1950's was the reading readiness theory (Razfar & Gutierrez, 2003). From this perspective, learning to read was highly associated with biological maturation; children were considered "ready" to read when they had met certain social, physical, and cognitive proficiency (Morrow, 1997). More importantly, this particular perspective did not adequately acknowledge the social aspects of learning and development. "As a result, traditional instructional practices such as whole class instruction and emphasis on formal features of literacy, including phonics-based-instruction, dominated instructional practices" (Razfar & Gutierrez, 2003, p. 36).

Following the reading readiness theory, research in early childhood literacy was transformed by the emergent literacy perspective (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). As articulated by Razfar and Gutierrez (2003):

> Whereas the concept of reading readiness suggested that there was a point in time when children were ready to learn to read and write, emergent literacy suggested that there were continuities in children's literacy development between early literacy behaviors and those displayed once children could read independently. (p. 37)

Drawing on developmental psychology's use of the word "emergent," this perspective was based on the following ideas:

1. Literacy development begins before formal instruction and schooling begins;
2. Listening, speaking, reading and writing develop concurrently rather than consecutively;

3. Literacy develops in real-life settings;
4. Children are involved in critical cognitive work in literacy development during the first six years of childhood;
5. Children learn written language through active engagement with their world;
6. Learning about literacy occurs in generalized stages that children can pass through in various ways and at different ages. (Teale & Sulzby, 1986)

While the emergent literacy perspective is based on the belief that growth in writing and reading emerges from within the child, it emphasizes that this growth results from environmental stimulation. Unlike the reading readiness theory, the emergent literacy perspective acknowledges that literacy is social in nature. According to Teale and Sulzby (1986), "The contributions of the social environment (parent-child interaction, adult modeling of writing and reading) and of the child's independent investigations of written language to development are topics of central importance in the research" (p. xxi).

Although the emergent literacy perspective recognizes the importance of the social context on literacy development, it does not identify or explain the social mechanisms that drive development forward. A more revealing theory is needed in order to delve deeper into the social nature of literacy development (Steward, 1999). As suggested by by Dyson (1994):

> …Our approaches to understanding children's writing have not been dominated by images of children as social actors nor by careful looks at children's social worlds. Rather, early literacy research and pedagogy, like most aspects of early childhood education, has been dominated by images of the child as a Piagetian scientist – an inventor who discovers how the written system works (p. 54).

More recently, researchers who have studied early childhood literacy have been impacted by social and cultural perspectives on literacy learning. Based on the work of

Vygotsky (1978), these theories suggest that learning and development are socially mediated. According to Gillen and Hall (2003), research that is informed by these perspectives have illustrated that literacy cannot be separated from language as a whole, nor from the wider cultural context. In addition, studies framed using social and cultural perspectives have also expanded the notion of literacy, "thus opening the way for later investigation of broader notions of authorship, young children's relationship to popular culture, and their involvement in the new technologies of communication" (p. 7).

Two Views of Bilingualism

In a similar vein, researchers who have studied bilingual children's language learning and/or language use have also structured their research using different perspectives. For instance, Grosjean (1989) identified two views of bilingualism – a monolingual or fractional view and a "wholistic" view of bilingualism. According to Grosjean, the monolingual view of bilingualism is one in which the bilingual has "two separate and isolable language competencies; these competencies are (or should be) similar to those of the two corresponding monolinguals; therefore, the bilingual is (or should be) two monolinguals in one person" (p. 4). On the other hand, a "wholistic" view of bilingualism is one in which the bilingual is an integrated whole that cannot be dissected into separate parts. "The bilingual is NOT the sum of two complete or incomplete monolinguals;" says Grosjean, "rather, he or she has a unique and specific linguistic configuration. The coexistence and constant interaction of the two languages in the bilingual has produced a different but complete linguistic entity" (p. 6).

In the next section, I will situate myself among the multiple perspectives that have been elaborated on above, making public the particular perspectives that shaped the ways in which I frame young bilingual writers in my study.

Theoretical Framework

Early Childhood Literacy Revisited

In their account of how early childhood literacy materialized as a unique and dynamic research area, Gillen and Hall (2003) argue that early childhood literacy research has "specific attributes" that distinguish it from the ways in which earlier researchers (e.g., Clay, 1975; Ferreiro and Teberosky, 1982; Teale & Sulzby, 1986) have examined "young children's relationships with written language" (p. 3). They suggest early childhood literacy is characterized by the following attributes:

1. It is a concept for a wide range of authorial and responsive practices using a variety of media and modalities, carried out by people during their early childhood. (p. 9)
2. It is a concept that allows early childhood to be seen as a state in which people use literacy as it is appropriate, meaningful and useful to them, rather than a stage on a path to some future literate state. It is not about emergence or becoming literate, it is about being literate; and it allows the literacy practices and products of early childhood to be acknowledged as valid in their own right, rather than perceived as inadequate manifestations of adult literacy. (p. 10)
3. It is a concept that allows early literacy to move beyond the restrictions of schooling and extend into all domains of the lives of people in early childhood.

This perspective proposes that young writers' texts (whether written conventionally or not) are a demonstration of their literate capabilities and should be examined by researchers as such. This particular view of early childhood literacy focuses on what young children can do, instead of looking at what they are lacking or deficient in. While this perspective provides a framework for the examination of young children's text, it does not posit theoretical notions on the actual process of composing. The following section elaborates on the particular theory that informed the way in which I attempted to learn more about young children's composing.

Individual Authoring in a Social World

Based on the premise that the development of higher mental processes in humans is based on social activitiy, sociocultural perspectives on literacy development assert that both authoring processes and children's texts are shaped by the social and cultural contexts in which they are formed. According to Vygotsky (1978), psychological processes in humans are divided into lower mental functions and higher mental functions. Lower mental functions, or elementary processes, as Vygotsky (1978) referred to them, are biological in origin. Examples of lower mental functions include sensation, reactive attention, spontaneous memory and sensorimotor intelligence (Bodrova & Leong, 1996). On the other hand, higher mental functions are of sociocultural origin and are unique to humans. As conceptualized by Bodrova and Leong, "Higher mental functions are deliberate, mediated, internalized behaviors" (p. 20). They include mediated perception, focused attention, deliberate memory and logical thinking (1996). In Vygotsky's theory, the mediated activity of sign and tool leads to the higher mental functions that are unique to humans. However, it is only through social interaction that signs become internalized

and serve as tools for transforming lower mental functions and behaviors into higher mental functions (1978).

Crucial to Vygotsky's social constructivist theory is the zone of proximal development. In Vygotsky's words, the zone of proximal development is "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (1978, p. 86). Thus, children can achieve more with assistance as long as they are working in their zone of proximal development. In *Thought and Language* (1986), Vygotsky writes:

> What the child can do in cooperation today he can do alone tomorrow. Therefore, the only good kind of instruction is that which marches ahead of development and leads it; it must be aimed not so much at the ripe as at the ripening functions…Instruction must be oriented toward the future, not the past. (pp. 188-189)

Much of the existing research on early writing development has examined the social processes that frame young children's composing. For instance, using Vygotsky's concepts of the zone of proximal development and internalization as the basis for analysis, Daiute and Dalton (1993) explored the nature and impact of peer collaboration on the development of story structure knowledge and use in writing of fourteen third-grade monolingual children. In an ethnographic study of second grade students, Dyson (1989) used Vygotskian theory as a framework for understanding how children's social relationships supported their growth as writers. Through their talk, Dyson noted social themes that dominated the children's interactions with each other and that facilitated literacy learning. These interactions included displays and admiration of competence,

critiques of self and others, and "interactional efforts aimed at both rising above the crowd and enjoying each other's company" (p. 67).

The existing research on early writing development also demonstrates the significance of examining the composing process in relation to the social context in which it is embedded. For instance, in her study of preschool authors, Rowe (1994) explored how children's literacy learning was embedded in the social world of their classroom. Social interaction in this particular preschool setting activated existing prior knowledge and was a means of confirming existing literacy. Social interaction also allowed the young writers to experience literacy activities beyond their independent abilities. As stated by Rowe, (1994) "…it appears that it is two opposite outcomes of social interaction –the building of shared meanings and the presentation of challenges to participants' existing meanings –that make literacy learning both possible and probable within the social context of the writing table" (p. 194).

Although there is an extensive body of literature that examines the social activity of young writers, the majority of the research has been conducted in monolingual classroom settings (e.g., Bomer and Laman, 2003; Dyson, 1989, Rowe, 1994, 2008). There is a scarcity of research that examines the social interaction of young writers in bilingual classrooms. Research that examines the social activity of young writers in bilingual classrooms is needed because bilingual classrooms are unique academic settings. Bilingual classrooms function differently than monolingual classrooms. English language learners (ELLs) who are enrolled in bilingual classroom receive instruction in two languages, their home language and English, while ELLs in

mainstream English classrooms and ESL classrooms are taught solely in English.[2] More importantly, bilingual education classrooms provide opportunities for ELLs to develop their literate competencies in two languages while other classrooms contexts do not promote biliteracy development.[3]

Most of the studies on the writing of bilingual children focus on the examination of written products in various classroom contexts – English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms, all English-speaking classrooms and native-language classrooms, (e.g., McCarthey et al., 2004) preschool classrooms, (Yaden et al., 2004) and bilingual education classrooms (e.g., Edelsky, 1986; Lanauze & Snow, 1989). Although these studies are insightful, product-based studies provide a fractional picture of bilingual writers because they do not examine the process of creation. As articulated by Gort (2006), "…product-based studies fail to provide a complete picture of students' abilities, perceptions, and strategies used in writing" (p. 324).

There is also a need for research that examines the social activity of young bilingual writers because there are differences in the literacy practices of monolinguals and bilinguals (Dworin, 2003). As suggested by Dworin (2003), "Much of the work on bilingual education…suffers from applying to bilingual situations research and instructional practices drawn from work conducted with English monolinguals with little appreciation that there may be important differences" (p. 174). Therefore, the next theoretical perspective is a critical component of the conceptual framework of this study.

[2] See Crawford (2004) for a description of the different kinds of program models for ELLs.

A Bilingual Perspective

"A monolingual perspective," writes Dworin (2003), "does not suffice for understanding bilinguals and bilingualism, or biliteracy, yet this is the guiding perspective for much of the research in this area" (p. 33). As previously mentioned, Grosjean (1989) suggests that the bilingual is a unique linguistic entity has developed competencies in both languages and possibly in a third system that is a combination of the first two. These capabilities have been developed to the extent required by the bilingual's needs and those of the environment. "The bilingual uses the two languages – separately or together – for different purposes, in different domains of life, with different people.

In describing bilingual children's experiences with language learning, Bialystok (2001) noted differences between bilingual children and their monolingual counterparts. She stated:

> Children who learn two languages in childhood, whether or not they learn them both at precisely the same time, have language learning experiences that undoubtedly differ in important ways from children who learn only one. How could it be otherwise? Monolingual and bilingual childen move in different cognitive worlds, experience different linguistic environments, and are challenged to communicate using different resources, remaining sensitive to different abstract dimensions. (p. 88)

As previously stated, Grosjean's view of bilingualism suggests that researchers interested in studying bilinguals' literacy practices must acknowledge the many specificities of bilinguals in their work and not draw from a monolingual (or fractional) model of literacy development. In addition, Grosjean's theoretical viewpoint proposes

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[3] Because bilingual education programs vary in their goals, the extent to which children develop their literate competencies in both languages may vary from program to program. See Crawford (2004).

that researchers examining bilingual's language use must do so through the bilingual's "total language repertoire as it is used in his or her everyday life" (p. 6).

Biliteracy: A Unique Form of Literacy

As written by Dworin (2003), "Biliteracy is a term used to describe children's literate competencies in two languages, to whatever degree, developed either simultaneously or successively" (p. 171). In his theoretical piece on biliteracy, Dworin (2003) suggests that biliteracy is an exceptional form of literacy that must be understood as different from that of monolingual literacy. Consequently, he outlines three theoretical understandings regarding biliteracy development. The first is that there are multiple paths to biliteracy development. Dworin argues that many of the beliefs about literacy development in bilingual contexts are misleading notions adapted from monolingual settings. For example, two such fallacies related to bilingual contexts are that the first language must serve as a base for literacy and that it is desirable to have a fixed sequence for learning in a second language. Dworin (1996) and others (Edelsky, 1986; Reyes & Costanzo, 2002) found that many students do not follow a fixed sequence in literacy learning in English and Spanish.

The second theoretical understanding suggested by Dworin (2003) is that biliteracy development is a bidirectional process. Contrary to Cummins' (1981) one-way transfer hypothesis (transfer from the first language to the second), Dworin argues that the relationship between children's English and Spanish and their uses for classroom activities are "much more fluid and reciprocal…and what is learned in either language may 'transfer' to the other language" (p. 179). Dworin's third insight into biliteracy development is that terms "first language" and "second language" often lose relevance in

bilingual contexts. He proposes that these kinds of labels may also promote false assumptions about children's learning.

As suggested above, the literate practices of bilinguals may be different than those of their monolingual counterparts. Consequently, this study has been informed by theoretical perspectives that focus on early childhood literacy, bilingualism and biliteracy. In order to better understand the relational work of young bilingual writers in a two-way bilingual immersion classroom, several aspects of their social activity must be examined. This qualitative study explored the following questions:

1. In what ways do bilingual kindergarten children interact with their peers as they compose written texts?
2. How are these peer interactions associated with written products?
3. What oral language is associated with these peer interactions?

Definition of Terms

In this section, I will define several key terms that are central to this study. These definitions are included to provide clarity and meaning of the terminology that will be used in the upcoming chapters. These terms are introduced here and described more completely as they are discussed in the review of literature as well as the findings chapters. Other specialized language will be defined within the body of this dissertation.

Limited English Proficient (LEP) – Throughout the years, many different terms have been used to characterize children whose second language is English. This term connotes a subtractive view of children who are learning another language because it suggests that they are "limited."

English language learner (ELL) – More recently, the term *English language learner* has been used to describe individuals who are not native speakers of English.

Biliteracy – Broadly, biliteracy is a term used to describe children's literate competencies in two languages, to whatever degree, developed either simultaneously or successively (Dworin, 2003). In this study, biliteracy refers to "any and all instances in which communication occurs in two languages in or around writing (Hornberger, 1990, p. 213).

Communicative competence – A speakers' cultural knowledge that includes social and psychological principles governing the use of language. It is this cultural knowledge that gives speakers the ability to use language in concrete situations in everyday life. Communicative competence also includes abstract "grammatical" rules pertaining to the linguistic code. (Schiffrin, 1994)

Interlocutor – A person engaged in verbal interaction, particularly as one of the principal, offical participants, not simply as an overhearer (Johnstone, 2002).

Utterance – A stretch of speech produced by a single speaker. An utterance may or may not consist of a complete grammatical unit (Johnstone, 2002).

Chapter Summary

The remaining chapters of this dissertation address the aforementioned research questions in a number of ways. Chapter Two provides a detailed review of the literature in order to contextualize the guiding questions of this study. Chapter Three details a comprehensive description of the methods used to investigate the research questions. Chapters Four, Five and Six discuss the findings of this study. Chapter Seven presents

answers to the research questions and discusses the significance of this investigation. Implications for research and practice are also included in the last chapter.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Using the theoretical framework of this study as a guide, this chapter is organized into three sections. The first section reviews studies that focus on young children's composing. The second section details studies that examine bilingual children's language use. The last section summarizes key studies that report on children's bilteracy development.

Research on Young Children's Composing

As previously stated, many researchers have examined specific features of young writers' interactions with peers. Using Vygotsky's concepts of the zone of proximal development and internalization as the basis for analysis, Daiute and Dalton (1993) described the nature and impact of peer collaboration on the development of story structure knowledge and use in writing of fourteen third-grade monolingual children. The researchers explored two hypotheses: that expertise is a relative and dynamic concept, and that young peers may define for each other shifting zones of proximal development (Daiute & Dalton, 1993). The following questions guided the analyses of their study:

1. What can young children who do not have much experience or success with literacy learn about story writing from working together?
2. What is the nature of this peer collaboration process? Are there commonalities between this peer collaboration process and key aspects of expert-novice collaboration, specifically generative and reflective processes?

3. How do peer collaborations transfer into changed representations of literacy skills? (p. 295)

As written by Daiute and Dalton, their findings suggest that:

> Young writers can expand their discourse knowledge and use by writing stories together. The children's apprenticeship involved intensive formulation, reformulation, and reflection about evolving stories. These children engaged in generative and reflective processes, which were noted earlier as characteristics of productive expert-novice apprenticeships. (p. 330)

The following study, also rooted on the Vygotskian notion that development occurs through social interaction in the zone of proximal development, explores peer collaboration while children were composing stories on computers. Lomangino, Nicholson and Sulzby (1999) investigated how interactive patterns develop in collaborative activity through an analysis of first-grade children working collaboratively while composing on the computer. The study was conducted in a middle-class suburb of a large midwestern city. According to the researchers, the findings of the study suggest that "even with minimal adult involvement, children exhibit many constructive patterns of interaction while composing collaboratively on computers" (p. 18). The researchers found the children's interactions to be highly focused on the task at hand, rarely digressing from conversation related to their writing activity. The study also demonstrated that children collaborated more effectively when they had some sort of agreed upon system for turn-taking and sharing.

According to the researchers, the children relied on each other as resources when they had questions about content, writing mechanics or tool use. As a result, the children

provided each other with the scaffolding that is considered "critical for development" (p. 18). Similar to findings in Dyson's (1993) research, Lomangino et al. also observed that the children were involved in complex social work as they composed with their classmates. According to Lomangino et al.:

> Children sought to gain attention and approval from peers, mark their uniqueness, and manipulate and/or maintain their relationships with others. Within each group, children's talk and interactions with the computer reflected distinct social agendas. These agendas ranged from maintaining equality and fairness among peers, to conspiratorial decisions to arouse fear in the opposite sex, to assertion of power and personal control over others…All of these social purposes acted as guiding forces in children's composing talk and actions. (p. 19)

Dyson's extensive research agenda emphasizes that the process of learning to write is a social activity that is closely connected to children's participation in their peer social world. In "*Whistle for Willie*, Lost Puppies and Cartoon Dogs: The Sociocultural Dimensions of Young Children's Composing or Toward Unmelting Pedagogical Pots," Dyson (1992) suggests that composing both oral and written texts is a sociocultural process. Using data from an ethnographic project in an urban school, Dyson illustrated the depth and breadth of young African-American children's composing processes. The data also demonstrated sociocultural differences in three areas of the writing process: the oral and written language genres a child uses, the discourse tradition a child draws upon and the kind of relationships a young writer creates with others in their environment (1992).

In *Social Worlds of Children Learning to Write in an Urban Primary School* (1993), Dyson explored how writing emerges within the context of children's social worlds. Collectively, her case studies of African-American children in a K/1 classroom illustrate "the richness and diversity of children's cultural resources for learning to compose, the social processes inherent in such learning...and the ways in which teachers and peers support or constrain children's learning" (p. 107). For example, one particular child's cartoon stories demonstrated "the differentiation and negotiation among sociocultural worlds entailed in learning to compose in school" (p. 107). More specifically, it highlighted the social process Dyson referred to as "staking a claim" on the official school curriculum.

In *Multiple Worlds of Child Writers: Friends Learning to Write* (1989), Dyson used Vygotskian theory as a framework for understanding how children's social relationships supported their growth as writers. According to Dyson, researchers, when thinking about important social relationships in the classroom, generally emphasize the one between teacher and child. In this particular research project, Dyson breaks away from this tradition and focuses on both the complex interactions and social relationships between classmates during various writing activities. Through their talk, Dyson noted social themes that dominated the children's interactions with each other. These interactions included displays and admiration of competence, critiques of self and others, and “interactional efforts aimed at both rising above the crowd and enjoying each other's company”(p. 67).

In her study of preschool authors, Rowe (1994) explored how children’s literacy learning was embedded in the social world of their classroom. Specifically, Rowe

wanted to learn more about the following aspects of literacy learning: the ways in which literacy learning was influenced by the values, beliefs and interactions that were a part of the children's social worlds, and the sociocognitive strategies children used as they learned about and use literacy in a classroom setting. Rowe's study revealed that social interaction was an important part of the process of literacy learning. Social interaction activated existing prior know and was a means of confirming existing literacy. Social interaction was "a source of anomalies and encouraged the revision of existing literacy knowledge" (p. 184). Rowe also found that social interaction encouraged authors to shift stances to become audience and social interaction encouraged internalization of the audience's perspective. Finally, social interaction allowed authors to experience literacy activities beyond their independent abilities. As stated by Rowe, (1994) "…it appears that it is two opposite outcomes of social interaction –the building of shared meanings and the presentation of challenges to participants' existing meanings –that make literacy learning both possible and probable within the social context of the writing table" (p. 194).

As previously discussed, researchers interested in young children's writing have framed their research using diverse theoretical perspectives. Sociocultural perspectives on children's commposing have challenged the assumption that authoring is an individual mental act, suggesting instead that authoring occurs between people as they "negotiate authoring processes, meanings, and textual forms as part of their everyday activities" (Rowe, 2003, p. 263). From this perspective, authoring is seen as a social practice. Consequently, children's talk is of high interest to those studying young children composing. For instance, Bomer and Laman (2003) examined two young students'

spontaneous conversation as they engaged in the process of composing and explored the positionings these writers assumed, those they assigned each other in the midst of their spontaneous talk. Positioning, as conceptualized by Davies and Harre (1990), is the discursive process by which identities are constituted and reconstituted through social interaction. Davies and Harre use the term "discursive practice" to mean all the ways in which people produce social and psychological realities. There can be interactive positioning, in which one person's words position another. There can also be or reflexive positioning, in which one positions oneself. According to Davies and Harre (1990) when a conversant is said to position themselves and another in their talk, the words the speaker chooses carry their own images and metaphors that "assume and invoke the ways of being that participants take themselves to be involved in" (p. 265). When individuals talk, they may not be aware that their words carry the power to invoke particular ways of being. As a result, one should not assume that positioning – reflexive or interactive – is necessarily intentional. "One lives one's life in terms of one's ongoingly produced self, whoever might be responsible for its production." (p. 265)

Similar to Davies and Harre's (1990) notion of positioning, Bloome et al. (2005) use the term "social positioning" to refer to the process by which identities are shaped and reshaped through the interactions people have with each other. They suggest the processes through which social identities are "named and constituted" are language processes. In other words, it is through the use of language that individuals "name, construct, contest, and negotiate social identities" (p. 103).

In their analysis, Bomer and Laman (2003) found that that the pedagogical structures embedded in the classroom they observed afforded the possibility of multiple

positionings – "even for the students usually constituted by the environment as 'weak'" (p. 453). Both the students and texts occupied many different positions in their interactions but Bomer and Laman argue that these positions were appropriated from resources already available in the larger cultural context.

Using Goffman's notion of the participation framework, Larson (1999) examined how shifts in participant roles contributed to text construction. Specifically, Larson described the role overhearers play in the social construction of children's texts through a fine-grained analysis of interaction in one of the writing activities available in the kindergarten class she studied. According to Larson:

> The role of overhearer is of particular interest because students spend a significant portion of class time in this role as they listen in on surrounding interactions. Furthermore, by analyzing how participation frameworks are dynamically co-constructed in ongoing writing activity, we may be able to understand how shifts in participant roles allow students to take on more responsibility for writing and learning. (p. 226)

Larson found that as students shifted roles in the participation framework, "the transfer of responsibility signaled changed participation and thus evidence of learning" (p. 250). The shifting of roles in the participation framework contributed to the joint construction and distribution of literacy knowledge.

The studies reviewed illustrate the diversity in which sociocultural perspectives (which are based on the work of Vygotsky) may be used as a framework for research that focuses on the social nature of young children's composing. Although each study varied in its research goals and overall research design, all of the studies demonstrated the

importance of the social processes that frame young children's writing and each also illustrated the significance of examining the process of composing in relation to the social context in which it is embedded.

Research on Bilingual Children's Language Use

There are a variety of studies that that examine the oral language of bilingual children. These studies vary in their focus. For instance, the oral language development of bilinguals has been of interest to researchers over the years. While the empirical literature on oral language development of bilingual children is somewhat small; most of the research has focused on the importance of the oral development of the second language (in most cases English). According to Genessee, Lindholm-Learly, Saunders and Christian (2005), studies in this area have shown that with increasing English oral proficiency, English language learners are more likely to use English, and increased used of English tends to be associated with subsequent gains in English oral language proficiency (e.g., Saville-Troike, 1984). In addition, with increasing oral proficiency in English, English language learners are more likely to interact and establish friendships with fluent English-speaking peers, providing them with additional opportunities to use English (Strong, 1984). Other research in this area has studied the oral language development of bilingual children's second language over time (e.g., Thomas & Collier, 2002). For instance Hakuta el al. (2000) found mean levels of oral proficiency increased from 1.75 to 4.35 to 4.80 in first grade, third grade and fifth grade, respectively. As suggested by Genessee et al. (2005), "The rate at which ELLs achieve advanced levels of oral language proficiency in English is of considerable interest, at least in part because of the long-standing policy debate about how long ELLs should receive federally funded

services" (p. 367).

Researchers have also examined the English language use of ELLs. Some of this research has been conducted in classroom settings (e.g., Saville-Troike, 1984) while other studies have been conducted outside of school (e.g. Hansen, 1989). The findings of these types of studies have varied. In their review of the literature on English language learners in schools, Genesee et al. (2005) suggest:

> …On the one hand, some classroom studies indicate in general, that increased use of English is positively associated with improved English proficiency: ELLs who tend to use English more than the L1 [first language] in the classroom during interactions with teachers and peer's tend to make stronger gains in English. On the other hand, these effects can vary as a function of ELL's level of language proficiency and with whom they interact in English. Less proficient students might benefit more than more proficient ELLs from increased interactions in English, specifically with their teachers rather than from increased interactions with their peers. (p. 368)

While studies that examine ELL's use of English are important, they promote a fractional view of the bilingual child. As suggested by Grosjean (1989), researchers examining bilingual children's language use must do so through the bilingual's "total language repertoire as it is used in his or her everyday life." Consequently, researchers framing their studies using a bilingual perspective have examined bilingual children's oral use of both English and Spanish. For instance, in a study of bilingual kindergarteners language use in a two-way immersion classroom in California, Delgado-Larocco (1998) found that the level of language proficiency was a determining factor in

peer interactions. More specifically, this study illustrated that in academic events, the use of English was preferred by English native speakers when interacting with peers. However, as the school year progressed, these students began to include single Spanish words during instructional events as they interacted with peers. At the beginning of the year, Spanish native speakers also interacted for the most part with other Spanish native speakers. Their interactions were mostly in Spanish. While limited, these students did interact with English native speakers, yet it was mostly to translate from Spanish to English.

In order to better understand how (a) interactions spaces are created within a two-way immersion classroom, (b) what kinds of language use are required of students in such spaces, (c) what the consequences are of such language use and how these expectations from speaker to speaker, Lee, Hill-Bomment and Gillispie (2008) examined the language practices of a kindergarten teacher and her students as they constructed "interactional spaces by their everyday interactions" (p. 77). In their study, Lee et al. found that children made language choices based on the assumed proficiency of the interlocutor. These researchers suggested that a strict enforcement of the instructional separation of both English and Spanish appeared to emphasize a division of the interactional spaces and language groups where only Spanish or English is used. They argued that certain teachers and students are becoming "marked as speakers of either Spanish or English" and that their "thickening identities may consequently limit the opportunities to socially interact in and practice the second language…" (p. 75)

Biliteracy Research

In his review of research, Wiley (2005) suggests that there is a scarcity of research

on biliteracy that focuses on language minority children in the US. Wiley determined that this lack of research results from the following: (a) definitional issues related to biliteracy, (b) an assessment system that only measures literacy achievement in one language, (c) and a political environment that has not supported the kind of maintenance\bilingual education programs that aim to develop biliterate students. Similarly, Dworin and Moll (2006) propose that biliteracy has remained "a relatively unexamined phenomenon" and speculate that bilteracy has not been an important area of study because research on bilingualism has "grown up with its own tradition, distinct and independent from literacy research" (p. 234). In an earlier review of the literature, Moll, Saez and Dworin (2001) identified three different types of studies on biliteracy. The first one involves quasi-experimental studies that match samples of monolinguals and bilinguals performing a series of well-defined tasks (e.g., Bialystok, 1997). The second type focuses on process by isolating the reading and writing of a bilingual student, often within a case study format and then contrasting it with a case study of an English-monolingual child (e.g., Jimenez, Garcia & Pearson, 1996). The third type, which is the focus of this portion of the literature review, examines biliteracy as part of broader social contexts, such as the classroom (e.g., Moll & Dworin, 1996).

In her study of two-way bilingual immersion education, Perez (2004) proposed that children did not equate literacy with a specific language. There was evidence that children used their literacy skills in a bidirectional way and that there was bidirectional transfer of literacy skills. As written by Perez, "Children transferred literacy skills learned in one language by hypothesizing, applying, reflecting and self-correcting as to the possible usage in the second language" (p. 112). Interestingly, Perez also noted that

children's use of code switching in their written texts appeared to be purposeful and used with awareness. Perez commented that code switching appeared more in students' informal writing – in texts produced for themselves and their peers (e.g., notes, cards and signs). In other words, when students focused on the social communicative process, they used all their language knowledge as they "struggled to find ways to express themselves with people about things or topics that mattered to them" (p. 108).

More recently, Reyes (2006) explored the connections between emergent biliteracy and bilingualism. According to Reyes, emergent biliteracy is the "ongoing, dynamic development of concepts and expertise for thinking, listening, speaking, reading and writing in two languages" (p. 269). In her study, Reyes found that when children have access to writing systems and to various literacy activities in both their languages, they are more likely to become biliterate rather than literate only in the dominant language. She also proposed that social interactions between adults and more experienced peers influenced and supported the children's emergent biliteracy. She noted:

> At school, in particular, we observed that the children made use of their home language while developing competencies in their non-dominant language. At home, we learned that these children participated in family literacy activities mainly in their dominant language. Soon, this distinction between dominant and non-dominant might not be valid…because of the bidirectionality process involved in developing their biliteracy. An additional finding here is that children's learning process can also be considered bidirectional in the sense that they are influenced by their parents and more experienced peers, but at the same time their parents' and siblings' experiences are also being shaped by the child's

knowledge and interactions with each other. (p. 286)

Escamilla (2006) examined the concept of semilingualism beyond that of oral language and into the area of literacy. Specifically, she studied how concepts of semilingualism have been applied to students who are learning to read and write in Spanish and English in U.S. schools. As conceptualized by Escamilla, semilingualism is a socially constructed concept that implies low levels of literacy in both English and Spanish. Her analysis of both bilingual and monolingual teachers' perceptions of the writing behaviors of students who are learning to read and write in both Spanish and English in an elementary school provided insight on teacher knowledge and theories about English language learners' biliteracy as it relates to writing development. For example, Escamilla found that bilingual teachers expressed a belief that teaching monolingual Spanish-speaking children to read in Spanish first was beneficial to the development of literacy in English. On multiple occasions, the bilingual teachers said that Spanish literacy provided the basis for ''transfer'' to English. The monolingual teachers also demonstrated knowledge of the transfer theory, and they also agreed that using a child's native language was beneficial for English language learners. In discussing this idea of transfer across languages, the teachers emphasized reading and not writing, and never used the term "biliteracy" in their discussion. They were very familiar with theories about cross-language transfer but had little knowledge about the development of biliteracy.

Another important finding in Escamilla's study related to teacher assessment of biliteracy through writing samples. It was found that early teacher assessment in this study was characterized by a focus on student deficits and these deficits were attributed to

the interference or "negative transfer" from Spanish to English. However, as teachers engaged in more in-depth conversations about these writing samples, teacher assessment evolved and increasingly focused on emerging biliteracy.

Gort (2006) investigated the writing processes of emergent bilingual children as they wrote stories in two languages during Writing Workshop. Specifically, Gort observed the ways in which first grade English-dominant and Spanish-dominant students develop as writers in a two-way bilingual program. Of particular interest to Gort was the nature of the transfer of writing skills and processes from one language to the other. Gort's analysis revealed that the children engaged in "hybrid language and literacy practices that encompassed their knowledge of Spanish and English, their prior knowledge and experiences, their formal and informal ways of communicating and meaning making and their developing bilingual and bicultural identities" (p. 334). Gort found that the developing bilingual writers appropriately applied skills learned in one language to the other language. She also found that the bilingual children in the study developed "spontaneous biliteracy." That is, the acquisition of literacy in Spanish and English without formal instruction in either language.

In addition, Gort's work suggested that developing bilingual writers "applied language-specific elements of literacy of one language to the other" (p. 337). Gort identified this as interliteracy and noted the following:

> Interliteracy is defined here as the written language parallel to a developing bilingual's oral interlangauge. That is, interliteracy is the literacy in development of bilinguals and may include the application of rules of one written language when writing the other. This phenomenon of developing bilingual writing has

two components: (1) the temporary application of linguistic elements of literacy of language to the other, and (2) the application of print conventions of one language to the other. (p. 337)

Chapter Summary

Dworin's (2003) theoretical discussion on biliteracy development along with the research reviewed suggests that biliteracy differs in significant ways from that of monolingual literacy because it includes "special forms of literacies and discourses not found within English monolingual situations" (Dworin & Moll, 2006, p. 234). Therefore, using various theoretical perspectives on early childhood literacy, bilingualism and bilteracy, this dissertation study will a) explore the peer interactions of bilingual kindergarten writers as they write alongside their peers, (b) examine the ways in which children's interactions related to the written/drawn products that were being created in the midst of children's social activity and (c) describe the oral language that was being used in children's spontaneous interactions. In the following chapter, I outline the research methods that were employed in this study.

CHAPTER THREE: THE METHODS

In this chapter I will describe the methodological aspects of this study. The first part of the chapter presents my subjectivity and decisions about the design of this study. A detailed account of the research site and participants are also included in this section. The second half of the chapter introduces the four phases of inquiry of this project and explains the data collection techniques and the data analysis techniques that were employed during each particular phase of the study. The last part of the chapter addresses the safeguards that were used to ensure the trustworthiness of the study. Ethical considerations are also discussed at the end of the chapter.

Researcher Subjectivity

> …Every person has a biography that precedes her existence as a researcher, incorporating characteristics like race, class, gender, and ability…who we are outside our identities as university researchers influences the kinds of questions we ask and the kinds of collaborators and participants we select for our studies. Who we are also figures into how we collect, analyze and interpret data…
>
> Dyson and Genishi, 2005, p. 57

All aspects of this study – the purpose, the research questions, the site selection as well as the ways in which I interpreted the data – are inextricably linked to my personal experiences as a bilingual individual and my past experience as a bilingual teacher. As an early childhood bilingual educator, I always struggled with teaching my students about the form and the function of writing. Although I understood the importance of giving children opportunities to explore the process of composing in a social setting, I still found myself wondering how (if at all) my students' interactions with their friends were supporting their growth as writers. To learn more about what Dyson (1993) refers to as the "unofficial world of child writers," I conducted a pilot study in my own classroom to

examine my students' spontaneous interactions as they wrote in their journals and at the writing center. The findings of this preliminary study demonstrated that the children in my classroom engaged in various kinds of social interactions that include displays of admiration, assistance, planning, surveillance, displays of accomplishment and play. The study also illustrated that children's interactions created a support system that ultimately provided opportunities for literacy learning. Unexpectedly, my pilot study also demonstrated the complex ways in which my students were using both English and Spanish as they wrote alongside their peers. Consequently, this dissertation study will further examine the oral language use of young bilingual writers as they explore written language with their peers.

Research Framework

Qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. According to Mertens (2005), "This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (p. 229). One reason for choosing qualitative research methods is the researcher's view of the world. Drawing on a world view in which reality is socially constructed, interpretivist/constructivist researchers attempt to understand "the complex world of lived experiences from the point of view of those who live it (Mertens, 2005, p. 13). Guided by this particular world view, I employed a case study design in order to examine the face-to-face interactions of young bilingual writers in a two-way immersion classroom. As articulated by Dyson and Genishi (2005):

> In their case studies, qualitative researchers are interested in the meaning people make of their lives in very particular contexts…Whether they are studying children learning to read, or to write, or to talk in a first language or a second,

> researchers assume that learners and their teachers make sense of talk and text within physical setting and through social activities that are informed by the world beyond the visible one. (p. 9)

This study covers the following case study characteristics, as described by Merriam (1998):

1. Case studies are particularistic. They focus on a particular situation, event, program or phenomenon.
2. Case studies are descriptive. The end product of a case study is rich, thick description of the phenomenon under study.
3. Case studies are heuristic. They clarify the reader's understanding of the phenomenon under study.
4. Case studies are inductive. Hypotheses emerge from an examination of the data.

Site Selection

Currently, more than 343 programs with the title of two-way immersion are operating in the United States (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2009). According to Gomez, Freeman and Freeman (2005), all TWI programs share certain characteristics. Students enrolled in TWI programs include English speakers and native speakers of another language. Another similarity among all TWI programs is the separation of languages for instruction and the establishment of a strong language policy that encourages students to use the target language. Finally, all TWI programs share a common goal – the development of bilingual, bicultural and biliterate students.

Although all TWI programs share similar characteristics, not all programs are designed the same way. Programs often vary in the amount of instructional time given to

each language. As articulated by Perez (2004), "…much variability exists in the percentage of time allocated to instruction in each language as well as to the progression of academic instruction in each language in two-way bilingual immersion programs" (p. 12). Nationally, one of the most common program models is the *minority-language dominant* (Howard & Sugarman, 2001). In these 90:10 or 80:20 programs, the minority language is used for instruction 80-90% of the time in the primary grades, with the ratio of the minority language to English reaching 50:50 in the fourth grade. *Balanced* or *50:50 programs* are also popular. In these programs, the amount of instructional time is equal in the two languages at all grade levels.

Similarly, TWI programs vary in their student population. Although some of the English speakers participating in TWI programs may be middle class, white or Anglo, not all English speakers in two-way programs are members of the majority U.S. culture. According to Perez (2004), "In reality, the speakers of the majority language, or English, participating in two-way bilingual immersion education come from diverse ethnicities" (p. 14). For instance, in 2002, the Center for Applied Linguistics reported that the English speakers in 54% of TWI programs surveyed had a mixture of ethnicities. That same year, 75% of TWI programs in Texas were composed of English speakers who were Latinos.

In January of 2007, I spent some time setting up meetings/observations with various TWI teachers in Las Palmas ISD (pseudonym), in order to find a classroom to conduct my study. These meetings were set up through existing relationships with the administrators of various schools. When I met with teachers, I briefly overviewed my research project, focusing on how and when I would be collecting my data. During each

meeting, I asked teachers to talk about their writing curriculum. On several occasions, I was also able to conduct some informal classroom observations. One of teachers I was able to observe was Faith Treviño (also a pseudonym). After my observation, Faith and I met and discussed my project and the possibility of collecting data in her classroom. Based on my observation and our discussion, I selected Faith's classroom as my research site. Unlike some of the other teachers I met with, Faith gave her students time to explore written language alongside their peers. I also selected Faith's classroom because she seemed excited by the possibility of me conducting my study in her classroom. Unlike the other teachers, Faith did not seemed deterred by the fact that my study demanded that I spend a significant time in her classroom both observing and video recording students interactions. After receiving formal approval from both Faith and her principal, I submitted an application to conduct research at Las Palmas ISD (pseudonym). I was granted permission by the school district during the summer of 2007.

A Unique Context

Anzaldua (1987) used the term *borderlands* to describe areas where two different peoples, cultures and languages come into contact with each other and interact. This study was conducted in such a place. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Border Town (pseudonym) had a population of 139, 722 in 2000. Of that population, 93.1% of the inhabitants were of Hispanic or Latino origin (United States Census Bureau, 2000). Because of its close proximity to Mexico, the people of Border town are in constant interaction with the Spanish language. The language practices of the population reflect the community's unique geographical location. Some people who live there only speak Spanish, while others only speak in English. However, many are bilingual and often

engage in language practices characterized by language mixing and code-switching. It is within this unique setting that I chose to select my research site. Following are the details.

Research Site

I conducted this study during the 2007-2008 school year in a kindergarten two-way immersion classroom at a school I will refer to as River Elementary. River Elementary was one of 33 elementary schools in Border Town and served approximately 749 students. According to the 2007-2008 campus profile of the Texas Education Agency Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), about 99% of the student population at River was both Hispanic and economically disadvantaged.[4] About 69% percent of students attending River were identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) by the school district.

River Elementary was one of five elementary schools in the district that offered two-way immersion instruction in grades kinder through fifth grade as an enrichment program for students who were identified as gifted and talented (GT). As a result, all students who ended up in TWI classrooms (whether officially identified as GT or not) received instruction based on the GT curriculum established by the school district. The TWI classrooms at River followed the 50:50 Content Model, (also known as the Gomez-Gomez Model) a TWI model that was initially developed for schools in the Rio Grande Valley, an area on the southern tip of Texas along the U.S.–Mexico border. (Gomez, Freeman & Freeman, 2005). The students received approximately half of their

[4] Texas Education Agency. (2007-2008). Texas education agency academic excellence indicator system report. Retrieved online from http://www.tea.state.tx.us/

instruction in English and half in Spanish. The language of instruction was divided by day and by content area. Mathematics was always taught in English and Science and Social Studies were always taught in Spanish. The kindergarten classroom I studied was a self-contained classroom of 18 students and one teacher.

Participants

The Teacher

Faith was a 34 year old Hispanic woman who was fairly new to the teaching profession. She received her teaching credentials through an alternative certification program and was entering her third year of teaching when I began collecting data in her classroom. In describing her teaching philosophy, Faith described herself as a "guide" and a "facilitator of information." She vocalized the importance of meeting the individual needs of her students and drawing on students' interests in order to make learning meaningful. Faith also talked about her teaching goals. She told me she wanted to "open them up to new ideas and new perspectives…I wish, I want to instill in them a love of learning and experimentation" (Interview, 2/2/08).

Faith grew up speaking Spanish and considered Spanish to be her home language. She indicated that she was not allowed to speak Spanish at school and "picked up English as a result by second grade." Like so many bilinguals, Mrs. Treviño felt that she was more fluent in one language than the other. In her words:

> My comfort level is actually the English. It's due to the fact that…I was not able to express myself in my home language in the classroom. And now I feel confident speaking the English more so than the Spanish. Even though I can speak the Spanish well but I am not as confident…Yes, I do feel more comfortable in English but I try not to convey that to the students. (Interview, 2/2/08)

Faith's Writing Instruction

Most of Faith's writing instruction occurred during journal time. Journal time was a structured writing time that occurred daily and lasted about twenty-minutes. Students' writing journals were created by Faith using card stock and stapled sheets of writing paper. The sheets of paper where students wrote each day were not blank. They were designed to encourage students to both draw and write conventional text. The writing sheet had a black space for an illustration at the top and blank lines on the bottom so students could include a written text to go with their drawing. There was also a blank line at the very top of each page so students could write the date on their journal entry. Generally, students wrote one entry in their journals each day. Before students wrote in their journals, the class met on the rug so they could discuss the writing topic for the day and to brainstorm possible writing ideas with each other. Writing topics were introduced by Faith in the language of the day (LOD) and usually related to the weekly thematic unit of study. For example, during one week in January, Faith informed me that the weekly theme related to their science unit on fish. During one of the English days that week, Faith had the students write about a pet fish. Following is what one student wrote in his journal on that particular day:

"I am seeng (seeing) the fish and my dad is plang (playing) my game and my mom is sliping (sleeping)."

Figure 1. Alex's entry about a fish

In discussing her writing instruction, Faith articulated the importance of setting clear expectations for all students. In order to make students aware of her expectations for writing, Faith used a writing rubric that outlined the components of "star quality" writing. As stated by Faith:

> The rubric was set up because I have certain expectations that I want the students to be able to meet. It's teaching spacing and detail and punctuation and capitalization. That's something I feel strongly about - that they leave this classroom with the capital letter where it belongs, the period where it belongs, the spacing of words and to be able to identify words…And also to have detail within their sentences as well as detail within their pictures because if they are not writing they can be drawing words and that's how they can be expressing themselves. And so detail is very important. (2/2/08)

Mrs. Treviño used mini-lessons to teach students about each of the components of the writing rubric (spacing between words, capitalization, punctuation, and adding detail to

drawings and to the text). These mini-lessons were taught several times a week and lasted about five to ten minutes. After the mini-lesson, students were dismissed to their assigned tables so they could write. Although students had assigned seats, they were not permanent. Faith continually moved students around although she was deliberate about the ways in which she grouped students at their tables. In her own words:

> I put a strong non LEP student with a strong Spanish-speaking student. By strong I mean that they're more developed in their writing and reading skills. And then I also put the weaker ones who are not as developed with the stronger English and the stronger Spanish. (11/6/07)

While Faith expected her students to become skilled at writing conventionally, she also wanted her students to learn to use writing as a tool for self-expression.

> Being a writer means being able to express yourself and your feelings. It doesn't have to be in words. Pictures definitely tell a story. I'm trying to have them be creative and so creativity is revealed not only by words but also by depicting that through drawings. (2/2/08)

Consequently, Mrs. Treviño created the writing center in order to give students time to explore the functions of written language without having to focus on form. During their language arts block, students spent about thirty minutes at various literacy centers that included the listening center, reading center, word work center, teacher center and the writing center. Students visited one center a day with members of their assigned groups. The center rotations occurred throughout the week and so students visited the writing center once a week.

In the writing center, students were free to write about any topic. They were also able to choose the kind of text they wanted to create (letter, story, lists, notes, etc). The writing center was equipped with various writing tools that included pencils, markers, crayons and pencil colors. Faith also provided students with a wide assortment of paper

that included lined paper, white paper of various sizes, tablets, sentence strips, envelopes and pre-made books. Picture cards were also available for students to use as writing prompts.

The Students

All 18 participants were between the ages of five and six and were Mexican-American. There were a total of six girls and twelve boys in the classroom. In TWI programs, approximately half of the students are usually speakers of English and half are native speakers of a non-English language. Having model speakers of both target languages is vital since the primary goal of TWI programs is to develop both language proficiency and academic proficiency in both languages for both groups of students (Freeman, 1998; Lindholm, 1992). In Faith's classroom, it was difficult to distinguish between the English-speakers and the Spanish-speakers because all of the students displayed a degree of competency in both English and Spanish. I noted this during my first two weeks of observations:

> At this point, I'm having a hard time figuring out which students are the English language models and which are the Spanish language models because students appear to be switching back and forth between languages so easily. (Personal Note, 9/17/07)

When I asked Faith about students and their language backgrounds she used the terms LEP and NON-LEP to describe the students. Initially, these labels seemed useful to me and I used the labels to help me determine which students were the English language models and which were the Spanish language models. As time progressed, I realized that these labels did not really describe students' language use in the classroom and I needed to come up with another way to describe the students in this study. For example, one

student who was identified by Faith as being NON-LEP was a fluent Spanish-speaker who very often became a Spanish language model in his daily interactions with peers. Similarly, two boys who were labeled LEP were very fluent English speakers and frequently served as English language models to their peers. Therefore, I decided to use the labels *Spanish dominant* and *English dominant* instead of LEP and NON-LEP to describe students' language use in the classroom. As I began to spend more time in the classroom, I realized even these dichotomous labels were problematic. There were several students in this classroom who did not fall into the categories *Spanish dominant* and *English dominant*. These students seemed to be more balanced in their language use. That is, they communicated in both languages quite effortlessly. As suggested by Hornberger (2005):

> The fact is that assignment of students to so-called English-dominant and Spanish-dominant streams for two-way bilingual education just does not work in Philadelphia's Puerto Rican community, given the myriad constellations of language use, ability, and exposure present in a community where ongoing circular migration is a fact of life for nearly everyone to one degree or another. Most Puerto Rican children do not grow up with just one mother tongue and then acquire the second language in school…(p. 162)

Like the Puerto Rican children Hornberger (2005) referred to, Mexican-American children living in border towns do not always grow up with just one mother tongue. In this particular TWI classroom, there were three boys who were able to cross back and forth between both languages with relative ease. Therefore I used the term *balanced bilingual* to describe these children.[5]

[5] Although the term "balanced bilingual" is problematic (see Dworin, 2003; Grosjean 1989; Hornberger, 2005) I needed to be able to describe the language proficiency of a small group of students who were not clearly dominant in one language or the other in order to understand the oral language use of these

In order to make sure that the label I selected for each student adequately reflected their language use, I asked Faith for her input. For the most part, Faith's portrayal of each student's language capabilities matched up with my description of the students. For example, based on my observations, I decided that Alex (a pseudonym) was pretty balanced in his language use. When I asked Faith to describe Alex in terms of the labels *Spanish dominant, English dominant* and *balanced* she said the following:

> He is both English and Spanish - fully capable in both languages. He is reading English. He is reading Spanish. He is writing English and in Spanish and he speaks with other children based on their comfort zone. Not his own, just the other person who is interacting with him. Their comfort zone. So he is equally developed in both (2/2/08).

Faith and I disagreed about the language proficiency of one particular child – Victor (pseudonym). Faith characterized Victor to be more balanced in his language use while my observations of Victor suggested that he was English dominant. When I asked her to clarify why she though he was more balanced in his language use she said the following:

> He speaks both English and Spanish. He likes to use both, at the same time. When he doesn't know a word in Spanish he uses the English word. He tries to use Spanish with the LEP students but he switches when he gets stuck. I guess now that I think about it, he probably is stronger in his English. But he really tries to use the Spanish a lot (11/6/07).

Based on Faith's elaboration and my own careful observation of Victor I decided to classify him as an English dominant student. The following table lists each participant (all names are pseudonyms), their language use in the classroom as determined by my initial observations in the classroom and their LEP/ NON-LEP status as reported by Mrs. Treviño.

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particular children. By suggesting that some children were "balanced bilinguals" I do not mean to diminish the oral language capabilities of English dominant or Spanish dominant students.

Table 1. Students' Language Background Information

Students	Language Use in the Classroom	LEP/Non-LEP Status
Cosme	Balanced	LEP
Alex	Balanced	LEP
Alvaro	Balanced	NON-LEP
Rodrigo	Spanish dominant	LEP
Lourdes	Spanish dominant	LEP
Sonia	Spanish dominant	LEP
Leonardo	Spanish dominant	LEP
Marco	Spanish dominant	LEP
Jasmin	Spanish dominant	LEP
Patricia	Spanish dominant	LEP
Leticia	English dominant	NON-LEP
Rosalva	English dominant	NON-LEP
Juan	English dominant	NON-LEP
Javier	English dominant	NON-LEP
Sergio	English dominant	NON-LEP
Gerardo	English dominant	NON-LEP
Victor	English dominant	NON-LEP
Arthur	English dominant	NON-LEP

Phases of Inquiry

I collected data during a five month period that started in September 2007 and ended in February 2008. I spent a total of 45 days in the field and video recorded approximately 25 hours of student interactions during journal time and writing center time. The following sections outline the four phases of inquiry that my study required. These phases were adapted from Rowe (1994).

Phase 1: Field Entry

I began collecting data on Monday, September 17th, 2007. The purpose of this phase, which lasted two weeks, was to familiarize myself with the teacher, students, and their classroom environment, to learn more about the ways in which the teacher structured and implemented her writing instruction, as well as to negotiate my role as a researcher and participant observer. I was in the classroom daily (from 8:00 – 3:00) during this two-week period. During the first week, I observed students throughout the day, taking detailed notes of the classroom environment and daily routines. Field notes were expanded with methodological notes and personal notes after leaving the classroom. During the second week, I introduced video and audio recording so that both the teacher and the students could become accustomed to this potentially obtrusive form of data collection. I used a hand-held video camera so I could move around and capture all children sitting at their respective tables. At the beginning, students seemed distracted by the camera and often "performed" for the camera. For example, during the first day of video recording, Leonardo stopped what he was doing, looked straight at the camera and proceeded to sing his own rendition of "Five Little Monkeys" (Field note, 9/17/07). By the end of the week, most students ignored me as I recorded them. Data collection techniques during Phase 1 included (a) participant observation, (b) field notes written in the classroom, expanding field with methodological notes and personal notes after leaving the classroom, (c) and video/audio recording. Each of these data collection techniques is detailed below.

Participant Observation

According to Glesne (1999), researchers seek to make the strange familiar and the familiar strange through participant observation. In order to attempt to make the strange familiar, I spent the first couple of weeks in the field trying to get a general sense of the day-to-day workings of the classroom. As suggested by Glesne, I first focused my attention on the setting. I took notes of the physical layout of the classroom, paying close attention to students' seating arrangements during writing activities. I then focused on the participants in the setting, noting their conversations, actions and their interactions throughout the day. I also took extensive notes of events in the classrooms, distinguishing daily events from special events. As I moved into the other phases of the study, my observations became more purposeful. I zeroed in on specific classroom events (e.g., journal writing) or on specific students and their interactions while composing.

Various writers have described the observational roles/stances taken up by researchers as they collect data from their participants (e.g., Adler & Adler, 1994; Spradley, 1980). These observational roles vary by level of involvement and usually fall into a continuum with complete participation on one end and complete observer at the other end. As suggested by Merriam (1998), researchers' levels of involvement may shift throughout the research process. She states:

> As the researcher gains familiarity with the phenomenon being studied, the mix of participation and observation is likely to change. The researcher might begin as a spectator and gradually become involved in the activities being observed. In other situations an investigator might decide to join a group to see what it is actually like to be a participant and then gradually withdraw, eventually assuming the role of interested observer. (p. 102)

In order to get a sense of the general day-to-day workings of Ms. Treviño's classroom, I assumed more of a participant role during the first phase of the study. I walked around the classroom and often sat next to a group of students as they completed their assignments. I helped students who requested my assistance and responded to students' questions as often as I could. However, as data collection continued into Phase 2 and Phase 3, I assumed more of an observational stance.

Expanded field notes

Field notes were written in a notebook and were expanded within twenty-four hours of leaving the classroom. In order to expand my notes, I watched the video recording for that day, adding detailed information about the recorded event when needed. Methodological notes, (MN) and personal notes (PN) were also added during this expansion (Cosaro, 1985). Theoretical notes included attempts to determine the theoretical significance of a particular set of field notes. Methodological notes included commentary on shifts or changes in data collection techniques. Finally, personal notes conveyed my feelings or reactions to particular events that occurred during observations and/or video recordings. During this expansion I also noted particular segments of video that needed to be transcribed.

Video and audio recording

Video recording was used to document student interactions during journal time and in the writing center. As previously stated, I used a hand-held video camera to record students' interactions. I had initially considered placing the video camera on a tripod. However, through my initial observations I realized that it would be difficult to record students' interactions if the camera was in a stationary position. Because students

sat in groups during composing events, I focused on the group of students as a whole, moving the camera around to capture interactions as they occurred. If for example, two of the four students at a table were talking, I zeroed in on those students talking. If all students were working quietly on their individual compositions, I zoomed the camera out to capture the entire group at the table.

My purpose in audio recording was to have a back-up of the dialogue occurring between students during composing sessions. At times it was difficult to decipher students' talk in the video recording, especially if the camera was not facing the student while he/she was conversing. The audio recordings were later used to aid in the transcription of selected video segments.

Phase 2: Focused Observations

The second phase of my study involved a more focused exploration of the peer interactions that occurred during daily writing activities. The purpose of this phase, which lasted about eleven weeks, was to make sure that all of the participants were well represented in the data being collected. During Phase 1 of my study, I determined that students were given time to compose alongside their peers during journal time and during writing center time. Therefore, I only video recorded students when they were writing in their journals or when they visited the writing center. At the beginning of Phase 2, I used Mrs. Treviño's literacy center rotations to guide my video recording. When I arrived each morning, I checked the center rotation chart to see which group of students would be working at the writing center. I then video recorded that same group of students during the morning journaling session. This way, I focused on one group of students (instead of jumping around from table to table) throughout the day. Other data collection techniques

during Phase 2 included (a) brief field notes written in classroom and expanding field notes after leaving the classroom, (b) informal interviews with teacher and/or students to seek clarifying information and (c) collection of written artifacts.

Data analysis began in Phase 2 and continued throughout the duration of the study. During this phase, I reviewed my field notes in order to guide the emergent design of the study and the emergent structure of later data collection phases (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I also began analyses of my field notes, videotapes and artifacts. These analyses were conducted using the constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and were used to develop tentative theoretical formulations/hypotheses about the data that guided later methodological decisions about data collection. The transcription of selected video segments also began in this phase. In the following sections I address how the data collection methods already discussed in Phase 1 changed in purpose during Phase 2. Then I discuss two data collection techniques that were introduced in this phase of the study. Finally I talk about the process of transcribing and analyzing the data.

Field Notes

Because I held the camera as I recorded students, I was not able to take extensive field notes while students were engaged in writing. Before each recording session, I noted the following in my notebook: the date, the language of the day, the kind of writing session being recorded (journal time, writing center time), and the group of students that were going to be included in the recording. If I was recording students during journal time, I also noted the journal topic for the day. As soon as I finished recording, I spent a few minutes writing a quick summary of what I had observed as I recorded students. The following is an example of one of my summaries:

> During circle time, Leonardo announces that he is going to write about camels and the Three Kings. Leonardo asks Marco to help him draw a camel. Jasmin enters the interaction and shows Leonardo how to draw a camel. Leonardo begins to sound out the word *camello*. Jasmin, Marco and Alvaro all attempt to assist Leonardo. Jasmin takes Leonardo's journal and corrects what he has written. Leonardo asks her why she is erasing what he has written. Jasmin announces that she is also drawing a camel because camel can live on a farm. Towards the end of journal time Leonardo engages in cross-talk with Victor and Rodrigo. (Field note 11/30/07)

After leaving the classroom, I re-read my summaries and then watched the video tapes. Iexpanded my field notes by adding detailed information about the recorded event. Methodological notes, theoretical notes and personal notes were added during this expansion. My expanded field notes were typed and kept separate from my hand-written summaries.

Unstructured/Informal Interviews

Merriam (1998) suggests that unstructured/informal interviews are useful when the researcher does not know enough about a phenomenon to ask appropriate questions. In this study, unstructured interviews with the teacher served a couple of purposes. First, these unstructured interviews allowed me to learn about ways in which the teacher structured and implemented her writing instruction. These informal interviews with the classroom teacher also allowed me to gain background information on the individual participants and how classroom events prior to my field entry influenced students' interactions. I conducted one unstructured interview with the teacher during Phase 2. This interview served to clarify some questions I had about the ways in which students were grouped at their tables during journal time. All interviews with the teacher were audio recorded and later transcribed. I also engaged in informal interviews with students.

These informal interviews were used to gather information about students' written/drawn products.

The Collection of Written/Drawn Artifacts

I only collected the written/drawn texts that were created during writing session that were video recorded. Participants' written/drawn artifacts were photocopied and/or photographed, depending on the kind of product that was created. Students' journal entries were photocopied at the end of each week because I had to take the journals and copy them outside campus (I did not have access to copy machines at the school). Each entry was dated and filed according to the month it was created. Collecting students' products at the writing center was a bit more challenging. Very often, students would compose a text on a sheet of paper and then fold up the paper and put it in their pocket to take home. If I was quick enough, I asked students if I could take a digital picture of their final product before they put it away. If students put their compositions away before I had the chance to photograph it, I asked students to tell me about what they had written and included the information in my field notes. On other occasions, students put their finished compositions in a "finished work" bin so that the teacher could look over their writing. When this occurred, I was able to photocopy their products. As with the journal entries, all final products collected at the writing center were dated and filed according to the month it was created.

Transcribing and Translating

The transcription of recorded interactions began in this phase and continued throughout the duration of the study. As suggested by Roberts (1997), transcribers have to develop a transcription system and/or conventions that can best represent the

interactions they have captured on video/audio recordings, and this means "managing the tension" between accuracy, readability, and representation. In this study, transcription conventions were modified from Dyson (1989). The table below demonstrates the conventions used in the presentation of transcripts.

Table 2. Transcription Conventions

eyes	Underlined words/phrases that are italicized indicate when a child has switched languages in the middle of their utterance (e.g., El Hombre Araña tiene *eyes*.) or has used a hybrid word (e.g., Lo van a *flochar*).
NO	Capitalized words or phrases indicate an increase in volume (e.g., NO! I don't want to.).
I-C	Capitalized letters separated by hyphens or commas indicate that the letters were spoken or words were spelled aloud by the speaker (e.g., Una V y luego una I-C-T-O-R).
/s/	Parallel slashed lines indicate the sound of the included letter(s) (e.g., What letter is /ñ/?).
/s:/	A colon included in the previous symbol indicates that the included letter sound was elongated by the speaker.
( )	Parentheses around text contain notes about the contextual and nonverbal information. Parentheses may also contain English translations of Spanish utterances.
(***)	Asterisks enclosed in parenthesis indicate inaudible or undecipherable words or phrases spoken.
[ ]	Brackets contain explanatory information inserted by me rather than by the speaker (e.g., I am not a sun! [I] am a boy.).
…	Ellipsis points inserted in the middle of a line of text indicates omitted material.
^^^	Carrot tops indicate where transcript has been shorted.
,	Commas refer to pauses within sentence units.
-	Dashes indicate interrupted or unfinished utterances.

// Slash marks indicate simultaneous/overlapping speech.

In addition to developing a transcription system, researchers also have to select the segments of recorded interactions that will be transcribed. According to Green, Franquiz and Dixon (1997):

> The act of choosing a segment of life to transcribe implies decisions about the significance of the strip of talk or the speech event, which, in turn, implies that the talk or even has been interpreted from some point of view. Thus, choosing a unit of talk to transcribe is a political act… (p. 173).

The selection of video recordings for transcription in my dissertation study were purposeful; I was guided by my research questions and by my working hypotheses/theories that emerged throughout the analysis and interpretation of the data (Mertens, 2005). Children's utterances were transcribed in the language and/or languages in which they were spoken. Only excerpts of the transcript that would be used to illustrate particular findings were translated.

The Constant Comparative Method

Data analysis began in Phase 2 and continued throughout the duration of the study. During this phase, I reviewed my field notes in order to guide the emergent design of the study and the emergent structure of later data collection phases (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I also began analyses of my field notes, videotapes and artifacts. These analyses were conducted using the constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and were used to develop tentative theoretical formulations/hypotheses about the data that guided later methodological decisions about data collection.

Researchers using the constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) need to constantly interact with the data, asking questions that are designed to generate theory and relate concepts. The first step in this recursive process was characterized by an open coding of the data. I engaged in a line-by-line analysis, noting initial wonderings (What is going on here?) and similarities and differences in the data (What looks like what?). As I continued to read and re-read the data, I began to name and categorize the data. As theoretical notions were formed, negative cases were sought and analyzed to check and/or refine categories. The categories developed are described in chapter 4.

Phase 3: Theoretical Sampling

This phase of the study lasted about four weeks. Data collection techniques during Phase 3 were similar to those in Phase 2 (expanded field notes, video/audio recording, the collection of artifacts and informal interviews with teacher and/or students). During this phase, sampling became more theoretical. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967):

> Theoretical sampling is the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges. (p. 45)

In this phase, I decided to change my data sampling techniques. In Phase 2, I looked across the entire data set and recorded a different group of students each day I was in the field. In other words, my sampling was representative. As I began to examine the ways in which students' interactions were associated with their written texts I realized that I needed to focus on one group of students and observe them over time. My reviews of the

data suggested that interactions that occurred between the students on one day could have an impact on later interactions and/or on their composing. Thus, I purposefully selected one of the four groups of students and recorded their interactions for a month. My choice was based on several reasons. First, I wanted to observe a group that had students with varying language capabilities. The group I selected included two Spanish-dominant students, one English-dominant student and one student who I identified as being balanced in both languages. I also wanted a record a group of students that displayed a wide range of interaction styles. Two of the students at the table were very talkative and outgoing while the other two students were more reserved. During this phase of the research process, I continued to transcribe and began ethnographic microanalyses of selected segments of video recordings (Erickson, 1992).

Ethnographic microanalysis

In addition to the constant comparative method, I also completed microanalyses of selected segments of video recordings (Erickson, 1992). These microanalyses were used to take a closer look at the oral language being used in students' interactions. Selection of video segments were purposeful; I was guided by my research questions and by the data collected thus far. The selection of video recordings for microanalyses was based on a thorough review of personal notes and methodological notes found in the expanded version of my field notes. My analysis proceeded in the following manner as suggested by Erickson (1992). Using a copy of the original video recordings, I reviewed the entire event, without stopping at any point along the way. As I watched/listened, I wrote notes that identified snippets of talk that were of particular interest to me. In the next stage, I distinguished the boundaries of the interaction by playing the recording

several times. As suggested by Erickson, (1992) I identified the sequential parts of the interactional event – an opening phase, a phase of instrumental focus and a phase of winding down. Next, I examined particular segments within the interactional event that were significant (using my notes to select these segments). I identified the boundaries of these segments of talk and then defined them (e.g., two students playing with markers). I then engaged in detailed transcription of the verbal and nonverbal behavior of the individuals in the segments that were previously identified.

After preparing microanalysis of several snippets of interaction, I tried to demonstrate the representativeness of these instances by returning to the recordings and/or field notes to find other instances that were similar to the first (e.g., all interactions between student X and student Y, all interactions in which one student assisted another with their writing). As written by Erickson (1992), "Systematic search for patterns of generalization within the corpus strengthens the argument for the representativeness of the instances chosen for microanalysis. Thus, ethnographic microanalysis proceeds by the method of analytic induction in identifying significant phenomena and dimensions of contrast" (p. 220).

Phase 4: Field Exit

The final phase of this study involved exit from the field and continued analysis. This phase lasted approximately two weeks. During this phase I was no longer video recording students. I conducted my final interview with Mrs. Treviño to seek clarifying information about students' language use. I also began to check my interpretations of the data by watching selected video recordings of students' interactions with Faith.

Trustworthiness

The following section will describe the strategies I used to strengthen the trustworthiness of my study. These strategies were employed throughout all phases of the study. A number of researchers have outlined criteria for judging the quality of qualitative research (e.g., Lincoln & Guba, 1989). Lincoln and Guba (1989) suggest the following categories: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

The following strategies were used to enhance credibility: prolonged engagement, triangulation of data, member checks and peer debriefing. Mertens (2005) proposes that a researcher may leave the field once they have "confidence that themes and examples are repeating instead of extending." (p. 254). To increase the credibility of this study, I spent a prolonged amount of time in the field. I spent 45 days in Faith's classroom during a five month period. In total, I was in the classroom collecting data approximately 110 hours. According to Mertens (2005), triangulation involves "checking information that has been collected from different sources or methods for consistency of evidence across sources of data" (p. 255). In this study, I used multiple data sources to create and support analyses and interpretations. Data sources included video/audio recordings, field notes written during observations, informal interviews with students and the teacher and the collection of artifacts. Another strategy I used to enhance the credibility of my study was member checking. In member checking, the researcher "[takes] data and tentative interpretations back to the people from whom they were derived and [asks] them if they results are plausible" (Merriam, 1998, p. 204). Member checking is useful technique because it accomplishes two things. First, it gives participants an opportunity to verify

that the researcher has reflected their perspectives. It also helps the researcher develop new ideas and interpretations (Glesne, 1999). Once I transcribed my interviews, I emailed a copy of the transcripts to Mrs. Treviño so she could add information, clarify statements or voice any concerns. During the last phase of the study, I also began to check my interpretations of the data by watching selected video recordings of students' interactions with Faith. Faith and I met four times after school to debrief about the recordings. Before watching the videos, I emailed Faith transcripts of each recording so she could write down her initial thoughts and perceptions about the kinds of social interactions occurring between students. I also asked her to think about the ways in which students appeared to be using oral language in their interactions. During our face-to-face meetings, I began each session with the following question: What did you think? After Faith shared her thoughts we watched selected segments of the video together. I chose portions of the video recordings that contained representative examples of the analytic categories I had developed. I audio recorded our conversation that occurred as we watched the videos. I also wrote down key words or phrases that Faith used throughout our conversations that either corroborated or contradicted my analyses and interpretations.

The last method I used to safeguard my study was peer debriefing. According to Mertens (2005), "The researcher should engage in an extended discussion with a disinterested peer, of findings, conclusions, analysis and hypotheses. The peer should pose searching questions to help the researcher confront his or her own values and to guide next steps in the study" (p. 254). As I began to analyze the data, I shared initial categories and interpretations of the data with a colleague. My peer debriefer asked

challenging questions that helped me to fine tune my analytic categories and initial interpretations if the data. Once categories became more polished I asked my colleague to look over selected transcripts in order to receive feedback on the newly refined categories.

Dependability

Mertens (2005) proposes that a dependability audit can be conducted to demonstrate the quality and suitability of the inquiry process. Throughout each phase of the study, I kept a record of changes that occurred during the collection of data that were needed to answer the research questions in my field notes. For example, on January 28, I noted when my sampling techniques changed. I wrote:

> For the next three weeks I am going to record the same table during journal time to focus on answering research question number three. I want to examine how student interactions are associated with written texts. Important to see this over time…

Transferability

As stated by Mertens (2005), "In qualitative research, the burden of transferability is on the reader to determine the degree of similarity between the study site and the receiving context. The researcher's responsibility is to provide sufficient detail to enable the reader to make such a judgment" (p. 256). In this study, I engaged in rich, thick description by providing extensive and careful contextual information about River Elementary, Faith's classroom and her writing instruction to allow readers to make judgments about the transferability of findings and interpretations.

Confirmability

With confirmability, the research describes how "data, interpretations, and outcomes are rooted in contexts and persons apart from the researcher and are not figments of the imagination" (Mertens, 1998, p. 13). In order to increase the confirmability of this study I, engaged in demonstration in the findings section of my report (Wood & Kroger, 2000). As suggested by Wood and Kroger (2000), I attempted to support my claims through presenting the steps involved in the analysis of excerpts rather than simply telling the reader about the argument and pointing to an excerpt as an illustration. According to Wood and Kroger:

> Demonstration is essential to ensure analysis of discourse rather than mere description…Demonstration means showing how the interpretations of individual excerpts (the subclaims) as well as the overall claims (about patterns and their interpretations) are grounded in the text. (p. 170)

Ethical Considerations

The IRB establishes the procedures researchers must follow to protect research participants from concrete ethical issues. These procedures include obtaining informed consent from participants, allowing participants to withdraw without penalty, protecting participants' privacy and disclosing any known risks associated with participating in the study. In this study, I have followed the IRB guidelines to safeguard my research participants from concrete ethical issues. My biggest challenge in this study was convincing school district officials that proper steps would be taken to protect the privacy and confidentiality of my research participants. Their biggest concern was my use of video recording in the classroom. Asides from the application I submitted, I wrote a

detailed letter explaining the safeguards that I had included in my study to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants. These safeguards included (a) the use of pseudonyms, (b) the inclusion of two signature lines on the parental consent forms – one indicating that the parent has allowed the child to participate in the study and the other indicating that the parent has allowed the child to be video and audio recorded and (c) the carefully controlled use of video recording.

Chapter Summary

This chapter detailed the methodological decisions of this study. Data collection techniques were described and the methods for analyzing data were elaborated on as well. Finally, the research site was described and the participants were introduced. The next three chapters will describe the major findings in the study. Chapter Four will focus on describing the social activity of the young bilingual writers in Faith's classroom.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE SOCIAL INTERACTIONS OF YOUNG BILINGUAL WRITERS

This chapter will describe the kinds of interactions that occurred between students as they wrote alongside their peers. In order to understand the breadth of peer interactions in this particular context, I reviewed field notes and video recordings that occurred both at the writing center and during journal time and that spanned the duration of the study. The findings presented in this chapter are not limited to one particular group of students. Rather, they are representative of the entire class.

Because this study attempts to describe the face-to-face interactions of young bilingual writers and examines the oral language used in these interactions, I decided to present participants' words as they were said, without "cleaning up" the language. Therefore, data excerpts of students' conversations will include grammatical errors, nonstandard forms of English and Spanish and hybrid language use that is sometimes used among bilingual people. My choice not to clean up the language is meant to provide evidence that young bilingual people are thoughtful in their language use and are constantly demonstrating their bilingual competencies in their interactions with others. In order to honor students' choices about language in their daily interactions with peers, I have chosen to present portions of children's conversations in the language or languages in which they occur. All data excerpts in the findings section of this dissertation are presented in a table format with the actual conversation in the left column and the English translation of Spanish dialogue in the right column.[6]

[6] This format was adapted from Palmer (2004).

As previously mentioned in Chapter Three, Faith carved out time and space for students to engage in the exploration of written language during two official writing activities – journal writing and the writing center. As the children learned about process of producing written texts, they relied heavily on their peers for support and guidance. The purpose of this chapter is to explain the ways in which students interacted with their peers as they displayed their literate capabilities and learned about the writing process. The research question that guided the analysis was the following: In what ways do bilingual kindergarten children interact with their peers as they compose written texts? The findings in this chapter confirm the existing body of research that examines the social nature of young children's composing (e.g., Dyson, 1993; Larson, 1999, Rowe 1994; 2008). Yet this section also illustrates how bilingual students' developing oral language skills in both English and Spanish play an important role in their spontaneous interactions. Consequently, the findings in this chapter set the stage for the upcoming chapters that focus more closely on the language use of the participants.

A detailed examination of the data revealed that students engaged in the following kinds of interactions as they composed alongside their peers: (a) *display of capabilities*, characterized by instances where students exhibited their knowledge and skills by assisting other students and by enforcing teacher expectations; (b) *negotiating social status*, characterized by instances where students established solidarity with one another and/or engaged in power plays; (c) *discussion of unmentionable topics*, characterized by occasions in which students tackled issues that were "off limits" in the official school world and (d) *play*, characterized by instances where students participated in games,

explored concrete literacy tools and engaged in pretend scenarios with their peers. Each of these interactions will be explained in the following sections.

Displays of Capabilities

According to Davies and Harré (1990), when a conversant is said to position himself/herself and another in talk, the words the speaker chooses carry their own images and metaphors that "assume and invoke the ways of being that participants take themselves to be involved in" (p. 265). Very often, face-to-face interactions during journal time and writing center time created opportunities for students to position themselves and their peers in ways that allowed them to display their capabilities. The students in Faith's classroom displayed their capabilities in two ways – by providing assistance to their classmates and by enforcing teacher expectations. The next two sections illustrate instances where students displayed their expertise, knowledge and skills by providing both solicited and unsolicited assistance. The third section describes interactions where students displayed their competencies by enforcing teacher expectations.

Solicited Assistance: "¿Javier me haces una star? Ayúdame."

While composing, students often asked their peers for assistance (Dyson, 1989; Rowe, 1994). In these instances, one student's request for assistance positioned another student as a helper. This created opportunities for the helper to demonstrate their knowledge and skills on all sorts of issues related to the composing process: spelling, letter/sound correspondence, letter writing, language use and drawing. I used the term *solicited assistance* to label interactions that were initiated when a peer articulated a request for help. The following data excerpt is an example of solicited assistance that

took place during journal time. Leonardo and Alvaro were at their assigned table with two other peers. In the midst of their individual composing, Leonardo announces that he is going to write about "*el Hombre Araña*" (Spiderman). Leonardo decides that he wants to write the word *araña* (spider) and begins to sound out the word. He sounds out each syllable and realizes that he does not know how to write one of the sounds he hears in the word. Leonardo looks up from his composition, turns to Alvaro and solicits his help. Leonardo's resourcefulness initiates an interaction that allows Alvaro to display his capabilities.

CONVERSATION:		TRANSLATION:
Leonardo	(to Alvaro): ¿Que letra es /ñ/?	What letter is /ñ/?
(Alvaro does not respond. Leonardo taps Alvaro's hand to get his attention.)		
Leonardo:	¿Que letra es /ñ/?	What letter is /ñ/?
Alvaro:	¿Que?	What?
Leonardo:	¡/ñ /!	¡/ñ /!
Alvaro:	La eñe - /ñ/, /ñ/. ¿Te hago la eñe? Así es. Mira.	The eñe - /ñ/, /ñ/. Do you want me to make the eñe for you? Like this. Look.
(A begins to sky write the letter eñe.)		
Alvaro:	Una eñe. Una eñe así. Y después una de ese (makes a tilde in the air) así.	An eñe. An eñe like this. And then one of those (makes a tilde in the air) like this.
Leonardo:	Pero ya se la puse.	But I already put it.
(L picks up his page so A can see what he has written.)		
Leonardo:	(pointing) /ñ/, /ñ/, /ñ/ araña. ¿Cómo es araña?	(pointing) /ñ/, /ñ/, /ñ/ *araña* (spider). How is [the word] *araña?*
Alvaro:	(sounding out) A-ra-ña. Araña.	(sounding out) A-ra-ña. Araña.

	(Journal Time, 9/25/07)

While the LOD was English, Leonardo, a Spanish dominant child, is composing in Spanish and initiates a conversation with Alvaro in Spanish. He asks Alvaro, "What letter is /ñ/?" This question is a direct request for assistance and Alvaro acknowledges the request. His response to Leonardo's call for help reflects Alvaro's astuteness in many different ways. First, Alvaro, who was identified by Faith as a NON-LEP student, chooses to answer Leonardo in Spanish even though he is fully capable of adhering to the LOD. Not only does Alvaro demonstrate his Spanish-speaking skills in this interaction but he also demonstrates that he is sensitive to Leonardo's needs by choosing to speak in Spanish.

Second, Alvaro responds by telling Leonardo the name of the letter that makes the sound /ñ/. He says, "The eñe - /ñ/, /ñ/," which shows that he knew the answer to the question Leonardo posed and is therefore fully capable of assisting his peer. In the same turn at talk, Alvaro offers to show Leonardo how to write the letter Ñ. He says, "Do you want me to make the eñe for you? Like this. Look." Interestingly, Alvaro does not proceed to write the letter Ñ on Leonardo's paper. Nor does he model writing the letter Ñ on his own paper. Instead, Alvaro uses his finger to sky write the letter for Leonardo. Sky writing is a technique that Faith used at the beginning of the school year to teach students the "proper" way to write capital and lower case letters. By using sky writing to assist Leonardo, Alvaro once again demonstrates his prowess. To start with, Alvaro proves that he knows how to write the letter Ñ. He draws the squiggly line (the tilde) that distinguishes the letter N from the letter Ñ in the air for Leonardo to see. Second, Alvaro

takes up one of the teacher's pedagogical techniques (sky writing) and uses it as his own tool for teaching his peer.

The following excerpt illustrates another exchange in which Leonardo requests assistance and positions a peer as a capable helper. Similar to the previous exchange, Leonardo solicits assistance in Spanish even though the LOD is English.

Leonardo:	Javier. Quiero hacer una estrella.	Javier. I want to make a star.
Leonardo places his drawing next to Javier and begins to look through some picture cards.		
^^^		
Leonardo:	¿Javier, me haces una <u>*star*</u>? Ayúdame. Hazme una estrella.	Javier, would you make a <u>*star*</u> for me? Help me. Make a star for me.
Javier:	¿Con este? (holds up a blue pencil color)	With this one?
Leonardo:	Si. Una estrellita.	Yes. A little star.
Javier draws a star on Leonardo's page.		
Javier:	Ya termine.	I finished.
Leonardo:	¿Me le escribes paraíso?	Will you write *paraíso* (paradise) for me?
Javier:	¿Paraíso?	Paradise?
Leonardo:	Si. Paraíso en Español.	Yes. Paradise in Spanish.
Javier sounds out the word *paraíso* several times and attempts to write it on Leonardo's page. Leonardo looks over at Javier.		
Leonardo:	No escribiste paraíso. No escribiste paraíso.	You didn't write paradise. You didn't write paradise.
Javier:	Si.	Yes.
Leonardo:	¿Donde? No lo veo. Pa-ra-iso.	Where? I don't see it. Pa-ra-dise.
^^^		

Leonardo:	Mi cuento se llama “Paraíso.” Mi cuento se llama paraíso. Le puse una pelota pero no necesitaba personas. Le puse una pelota y un árbol y nubes verdes y una estrellita me la puso Javier. También escribió pa-ra-i-so.	My story is called “Paradise.” My story is called “Paradise.” I put a ball but it didn’t need people. I put a ball and a tree and green clouds and Javier put a little star for me. He also wrote pa-ra-dise. (Writing Center,10/10/07)

The interaction is initiated when Leonardo informs Javier that he wants to draw a star. In this case, Leonardo is more indirect with his request for assistance and Jorge does not respond. Consequently, Leonardo reformulates his request in a more direct manner. He asks, “Javier, would you make a star for me?” and then follows up the question with the directive, “Help me. Make a star for me.” This directive reiterates Leonardo’s need for assistance and Javier complies by drawing a star for Leonardo on his paper. Seeing that Javier has carried out his request, Leonardo asks for more help. He asks Javier to write the word *paraíso.* Javier, who is an English dominant student, does not appear to be phased by the request to write in Spanish. He willingly takes on the challenge and sounds out the word *paraíso,* syllable by syllable, in order to figure out how to spell the word. Javier’s contributions to his peer’s composition can be seen in the figure below. The word *paraíso* is written underneath the green clouds.

Figure 2. Leonardo's paradise

Unsolicited Assistance: "I'll help you do the little G."

Similar to Dyson (1989, 1993) and Rowe (1994), this study found that novice writers are capable of assisting their peers in many different ways. While many of the students in Faith's classroom lent a helping hand when peers asked for assistance, they also offered their help when it was not requested. In these cases, students positioned themselves as helpers, demonstrating their knowledge and skills in the process. When students offered unsolicited assistance two things occurred – it was taken up or it was rejected. The following conversation illustrates an interaction in which one student offers his expertise to another in the form of assistance. Two English dominant students, Javier and Victor, are sitting at their designated table writing in their journals.

Victor:	(pointing to his drawing) This is the egg of Charlotte. (continues drawing) Charlotte has one thousand spiders.
Javier:	HEY! If you're gonna make Charlotte you have to make the webs!
Victor:	I already make a web! LOOK! (points to the web on his picture). What are you looking for? What? This is a web!
Victor begins to erase the web he has just drawn.	
Javier:	NO! You have to make it, you have to make Charlotte right here! You Have to make her be tiny.
Victor:	She's big! She's not tiny!
Javier:	Remember in the movie she's tiny.

(Writing Center, 10/22/07)

Victor creates an opportunity for Javier to step in and provide assistance when he informs his peers that he has just drawn Charlotte's egg. Javier responds to Victor's comment by positioning himself as a more knowledgeable peer. Javier looks at Victor's drawing and in a loud and authoritative tone says, "HEY! If you're gonna make Charlotte you have to make the webs!" Athough Javier may have intended his comment to be a friendly suggestion, Victor rejects the assistance. Victor reacts defensively to Javier's words. He says, "I already make a web! LOOK! What are you looking for? What? This is a web!" Javier continues to position himself as an expert on *Charlotte's Web* (White, 1952) and challenges Victor's drawing of Charlotte and her egg. On his next turn at talk Javier tells Victor that Charlotte needs to be tiny, demonstrating his familiarity with the character in the book that Faith was reading in class. Once again, Victor defends his drawing and rejects the assistance that Javier is offering. Victor says, "She's big! She's not tiny!" To

strengthen his credibility and his assertion that Charlotte is a tiny spider, Javier refers to the cartoon version of *Charlotte's Web* that they had watched in class.

The following exchange also illustrates a child providing unsolicited assistance to a fellow group member. Alvaro is trying to write the word *giving* on his paper. Suddenly, Arthur offers to show Alvaro how to write the lower case G in the word *giving*. At first, Alvaro rejects the assistance but Arthur insists and Alvaro finally accepts the help.

Arthur:	I'll help you do the little G.
Alvaro:	What little G?
Arthur:	Look.
Cosme:	The little G is like this. Look.
Alvaro:	I already know how to do it. The little G.
Cosme writes the letter on the plastic lid of the supply box and Arthur watches him.	
Arthur:	Uh-uh.
Arthur gets Alvaro's pencil and makes a G on his paper. Alvaro watches him.	
Alvaro:	Oh.
Arthur:	The little G.
Alvaro:	Oh yeah. (He takes the pencil and erases Arthur's letter and writes over it) I copy it?
Arthur looks over while Alvaro writes the letter.	
Alvaro:	Like this.
Arthur shakes his head no. ^^^	
Arthur:	Look. Look. Do it like this. Big.
^^^	
Alvaro:	There. Little G. Oh. This is not the little G (erases what he has written).

Arthur: Little coco.

Alvaro: This is not the little G. This is the little G.

Arthur looks over to see what Alvaro has done.

Arthur: That's the little G!
(Journal time, 10/15/07)

Arthur initiates the interaction by offering to help Alvaro write a lower case G. It appears that Alvaro is confused by the unsolicited assistance, perhaps because up to this point, Alvaro has been working quietly on his individual composition. Cosme, who is also sitting at the table with Arthur and Alvaro, enters the discussion and demonstrates that he also knows how to write the little G. He says, "The little G is like this. Look." Cosme writes a perfectly acceptable lower case G but Arthur discredits his accomplishment with a "uh-uh." He then takes Alvaro's pencil and writes the lower case G on his paper. Using Arthur's letter as a model, Alvaro writes his own letter G. However, Arthur is not satisfied with the letter that Alvaro has just written and continues to give him support. He says, "Look. Look. Do it like this. Big." Alvaro takes the advice from his peer and makes a letter G that appears to meet Arthur's expectations. When Alvaro shows his helper the letter he has just written, Arthur responds enthusiastically, "That's the letter G!"

Peer interactions where some form of assistance was given afforded opportunities for all involved. Children who positioned themselves as helpers or who were positioned by their peers as helpers displayed their wide range of knowledge and skills in the process of providing assistance. For example, children who helped their peers with

spelling and letter/sound correspondence demonstrated their literate capabilities in one or more language. The students in this classroom also displayed their bilingual competencies when they assisted peers in their "less developed language." For example, Javier (ED) helped Leonardo (SD) by writing a word for him in Spanish. Children at the receiving end of the assistance were able to move beyond their current developmental level (Vygotsky, 1978). For instance, assistance at the writing center and during journal time led to the conventional spelling of words and produced more detailed illustrations.

Enforcing Teacher Expectations:"You have to write the date!"

According to Allard and Cooper (2001), "…children comply, cooperate or resist" particular techniques that classroom teachers use to establish a "classroom culture" (p. 166). To create a classroom culture where students knew what was expected of them, Faith used a variety of strategies to clarify her expectations. During her language arts instruction, Faith set all sort of expectations for the official writing activities in her classroom. These expectations could be divided into the following categories: general writing guidelines, journal writing rules and center time expectations. While Faith's expectations shaped the official classroom world, they also influenced the "unofficial worlds" that students created when they composed alongside their peers (Dyson, 1993). For instance, students initiated interactions where they assumed an authoritative stance and enforced Faith's expectations. Interactions of this sort created openings for students to display their multi-faceted capabilities.

As previously stated, Faith laid out general writing guidelines in her writing rubric. These guidelines were based on the following writing conventions: capitalization, punctuation, spacing between words, and adding detail to illustrations and to written

texts. As students composed in their journals and at the writing centers, they often pressured each other to comply with Faith's writing guidelines. However, the data showed that students only enforced the particular writing guideline(s) they had already mastered. In the following conversation, Javier insists that his peers "do detail" in their compositions.

Javier:	I'm doing detail. Everyone needs to do detail.
Rosalva:	Is this detail?
Javier:	No.
Rosalva:	Why?
Javier:	You have to color all over.
Rosalva:	I'm going to color everything.
Javier:	Black?
Rosalva:	I'm going to make a rainbow too.

(Journal Time, 10/9/07)

Javier is drawing in his journal and announces that he is "doing detail." He takes on the position of enforcer with his next utterance. He says, "Everyone needs to do detail." While there are three other students at the table, only Rosalva responds to Javier's directive. It appears that she wants to make sure that she is following Faith's guidelines. She asks Javier, "Is this detail?" By asking this question, Rosalva positions Javier as an expert and gives Javier the opportunity to demonstrate his knowledge about this particular writing guideline. Javier looks at her drawing and decides that she had not met the criteria for including detail in her drawing. Rosalva asks for clarification and Javier

explains that she has not "done detail" because she has not colored all over her page. Rosalva informs Javier that she plans to color everything. She is specific about the detail she is going to add saying, "I'm going to make a rainbow too."

Faith also had particular rules for journal writing. For example, Faith expected students to write one entry per day in the LOD that related to the writing topic she assigned. She also required students to write their written texts in pencil. Another expectation was that students write the date on their daily compositions. The following vignette illustrates an occasion when Faith shared this particular expectation with her students:

Faith sits down on the carpet in front of the students and announces that they only have ten minutes to write in their journals. Several students groan but she ignores the groans and continues. She says, "Today you are going to write about your best day in school so far. You are going to have to think back." She pauses and then asks for three volunteers to share their writing plans. When students finish sharing Faith says, "Let's get started with at least writing the date on our journal. Let me pass out your journals. I will write the date on the board." Students get up and go to their assigned tables. Students open their supply boxes, take out their pencils and flip to the next blank sheet in their journals while Faith writes the date. She says, "Start with the date in your journals. That's the first thing you always write. We have five more minutes. Quickly, get the date on." Faith spends the remaining minutes of journal time walking around the classroom reminding students to write the date on their journal entry. (Field note, 9/17/07; also noted on 9/21/07, 10/15/07)

In the following exchange, Javier enforces the expectation that students must write the date on their journal entry before they begin composing. Javier, Jasmin, and Victor are sitting at their assigned table writing in their journals. Javier looks over as Vincent composes in his journal and says:

Javier:	You have to write the date!
Victor:	Oh yeah. I forget.
As Victor writes the date, he says the wrong number. Jorge corrects him.	
Javier:	Twenty-two!
Victor:	Twenty, twenty-two?
Javier looks around the table and notices that Jasmin in not working in her journal. She is finishing up her math work.	
Javier:	Jasmin! You have to be doing your journal.
	(10/22/07)

Javier initiates the interaction by informing Victor that he is not meeting the teacher's expectations. In an authoritative tone he says, "You have to write the date!" Victor concurs with Javier and begins to write the date on his entry. Javier continues to monitor Victor to see if he follows through with writing the date. As Victor writes the date, Javier corrects him because he says, "twenty" instead of "twenty-two." Once he is satisfied that Victor is on track, he looks around the table and focuses on Jasmin. Javier notices that Jasmin is not conforming to the journal time rules because she is still working on her math assignment. He says, "Jasmin, you have to be doing your journal."

By enforcing Faith's journal time expectations, Javier demonstrated his ability to function in the "official classroom world" (Dyson, 1993). It appears that Javier either recognized the importance of meeting Faith's expectations or perceived it (meeting the

teacher's expectations) to be a worthy goal. Consequently, he tried to persuade his peers to comply with the journal time rules that were established by Faith. In the following excerpt of dialogue, another student takes on the role of enforcer and attempts to pressure his peers to follow Faith's expectations. Arthur is scribbling on the back of his journal entry. Alex looks over at what Arthur is doing and says:

Alex: Awww! You're not supposed to do that. Eeeeee! You didn't put the date.

Arthur: Look. I'm falling.

(Arthur slides down his chair to the floor. With his own pencil, Alex erases what Arthur has written on the date line.)

Alex: You didn't put the word like the teacher. The teacher is gonna see it.

Alex shakes his head disapprovingly at Arthur.

(Journal Time, 2/6/08)

In this interaction, Alex positions himself as the enforcer. In his first utterance, Alex informs Arthur that he is not following two of Faith's journal writing rules. He says, "You're not supposed to do that," referring to the fact that Arthur is scribbling on the back of his journal entry. Without giving Arthur an opportunity to respond, he follows that utterance with "Eeee! You didn't put the date." Arthur ignores Alex's scolding but Alex does not give up trying to enforce Faith's expectations. He erases what Arthur has written on the line where the date belongs and tries to persuade Arthur with a different tactic. He reminds Arthur that the teacher is going to see his journal entry and that he should therefore write the date correctly.

Even though writing center time was less structured than journal time, Faith still set expectations for this official writing activity. For instance, Faith commented on the

fact that students seemed distracted by the introduction of new writing materials at the writing center. As articulated by Faith:

> "I notice that if I introduce new stuff, paper folded a different way for example, they want to write whatever on the new stuff and just toss it in the turn in box…Every time I introduce something new it's chaotic because they just want to write one line just to say, "I used this new thing." (Interview, 11/6/07)

As a result, Faith set clear expectations regarding the quality of finished products at the writing center. Faith continually reminded students that they needed to take their time on their compositions and that they had to finish one composition before they could begin another one. Any unfinished work needed to be placed in the "not finished" basket so that students could return to their composition during their next visit to the writing center. Another rule that Faith established was that students could not "waste" the materials at the writing center. Faith wanted students to be purposeful in their selection of paper products and to create compositions that were meaningful, not just "scribbles or whatever."

In the following interaction, Patricia attempts to enforce one of Faith's center time expectations when she sees that Rodrigo is wadding up his book.

Patricia:	¡YYY! 'Tas gastando las hojas porque las estas haciendo así. (Patricia pretends to wad up a paper)	EEE! You're wasting the pages because you are doing this to them.
Cosme:	Las debes de poner ahí. (points to the "not finished" basket)	You should to put them there.
Patricia:	(reading the words on the basket) No terminé. *Not finished*. *Not finished*.	Not finished. *Not finished*. *Not finished*.
Rodrigo:	Ya no quiero hacer esto.	I don't want to do this anymore.

Patricia:	¡No, no, no Rodrigo! Tienes que terminar *tu book*.	No, no, no Rodrigo! You have to finish *your book*.
Rodrigo gets up and puts the prefabricated book he was working on back in the "not finished" basket. He gets a blank sheet of paper and begins to draw on it.		
Patricia:	Cosme, dile a la maestra que Rodrigo no terminó su libro.	Cosme, tell the teacher that Rodrigo didn't finish his book. (Writing Center, 2/2/08)

Patricia accuses Rodrigo of wasting paper because he is wadding up his book. Rodrigo does not respond to the accusation, and Cosme enters the interaction and tells Rodrigo what he should do with the book he has not finished. It appears that Rodrigo attempts to justify his actions and replies to both Patricia and Cosme with "I don't want to do this anymore." Patricia speaks next and assumes the role of enforcer by saying, "You have to finish your book." Rodrigo does not respond to Patricia's command. However, it appears that he listened to Cosme's suggestion because Rodrigo gets up and puts the book he was working on in the "not finished" basket. Patricia is not satisfied with Rodrigo's actions and solicits help from Cosme. She orders Cosme to tell the teacher that Rodrigo has not finished his first composition, perhaps hoping that the threat of involving the teacher would motivate Rodrigo to finish his first composition.

The students in Faith's classroom displayed their capabilities in a variety of ways. In this particular classroom, students demonstrated their knowledge and skills by assisting their peers and enforcing the teacher's expectations. Frequently, these displays created opportunities for peers to support each other in the midst of composing.

According to Dauite and Dalton (1993), young and inexperienced writers can support the writing of their less competent peers. They propose the following:

> Even though two children are, for example, beginning writers, they have strengths and skills to share. Novices are experts who vary in their mastery of the myriad aspects of writing skill, and these diverse expertises become useful at different points during a collaboration. (Dauite and Dalton, 1993, p. 289)

Negotiating Social Status

Children's social status in Faith's classroom was not fixed. While students engaged in official writing activities, they negotiated social status through the construction of written texts and the face-to-face interactions that facilitated these constructions. Two aspects of social relatedness that were expressed and created in students' interactions were power plays and the establishment of solidarity. According to Tannen (1994), power and solidarity are both always at play in any relationship. Power has to do with the respects in which relationships are asymmetrical, with one person able to control the other while solidarity has to do with the relatively symmetrical aspects of relationships (Johnstone, 2002). Like other studies that have examined the social interaction of young writers (e.g., Dyson, 1993; Lomangino, Nicholson and Sulzby 1999) this study found that students were involved in complex social work by "maintaining equality and fairness among peers" and by displaying "assertions of power and personal control over others" (Lomangino et al, 1999, p. 224). The next section focuses on instances where children tried to exert power over each other.

Power Plays: "I'm the leader of this table."

During journal time and writing center time, students frequently assumed and assigned each other social positions that gave them varying degrees of power and/or

prestige. Students engaged in power plays to secure a higher social position in the group or to lower a peer's position on the social ladder (Corsaro, 1988; Lomangino et al, 1999). In the next interaction, a group of boys negotiate their social status by engaging in overt and covert power plays while writing in their journals. Arthur and Leonardo are sitting at their assigned table composing while Victor is sitting at the teacher's table writing by himself. He has "lost the privilege[7]" to work alongside his peers. Victor works quietly on his composition and then suddenly, he holds up his journal and calls out to Leonardo. He says:

Victor:	Leonardo el sol.	Leonardo the sun.
(Leonardo grunts disapprovingly.)		
Arthur:	What? What did you draw?	What? What did you draw?
Victor:	Leonardo es un sol.	Leonardo is a sun.
Leonardo:	Yo no voy a ser tu amigo Victor. ¡Yo no soy un sol! Soy un niño.	I am not going to be your friend Victor. I am not a sun! [I] am a boy.
Victor:	Ya lo rayé Leonardo. Hice un sol grande.	I scratched it out Leonardo. I made a big sun.
Leonardo:	Pues no lo soy.	Well I am not.
(Arthur goes over and whispers something in Leonardo's ear. L pushes A away.)		
Leonardo:	¡Déjame en paz!	Let me be!
Arthur:	(whispering to L) Llámale gordo a Victor.	Call Victor fat.
Leonardo:	(to V): ¡Gordo!	Fat!
Victor:	Vas a verlo.	You're gonna get it.

[7] Faith used this phrase in her classroom.

Leonardo:	(pointing to Arthur): ¡El me dijo!	He told me!
Victor:	Vas a verlo.	You're gonna get it.
		(Journal time, 2/4/08)

Victor attempts to enter the peer world he has been isolated from by drawing Leonardo into his journal entry and then telling Leonardo about it. It appears that Victor, an English dominant student, purposefully chooses to speak to Leonardo in Spanish even though the LOD was English. His decision to initiate a conversation with Leonardo in Spanish could be interpreted as a gesture of solidarity; however, Leonardo did not take it as such. Leonardo's nonverbal reply (a grunt) to Victor's announcement illustrates that he is not pleased that Victor has drawn him into his composition. Arthur joins the conversation by asking Victor, "What did you draw?" and Victor responds by telling Arthur that he has drawn Leonardo as a sun. This time, Leonardo verbally expresses his displeasure with Victor. Angrily, he tells Victor in Spanish, "I am not going to be your friend Victor. I am not a sun! [I] am a boy." Victor realizes that Leonardo is upset and attempts to resolve the dispute by editing his picture. However, Arthur's meddling into Victor and Leonardo's disagreement makes it difficult for the boys to reach an amicable settlement. In a covert power play, Arthur suggests that Leonardo call Victor *gordo* (fat). Leonardo submits and carries out the insult which causes Victor to say, "You're gonna get it." Following this remark, Leonardo deflects the blame to Arthur, proposing that Arthur was the one who said that Victor was fat. Leonardo says, "He told me," which allows him to position himself as the messenger of the insult and position Arthur as the initiator of the insult. The power plays continue. Victor gets up from his seat in order to

tell the teacher about the insult while Arthur and Leonardo resume working on their individual compositions. After a few minutes, Victor returns to his journal where he begins to edit his drawing. Once again, Victor attempts to enter the unofficial peer world. He calls out to Leonardo, picks up his journal, and points to his drawing. Leonardo looks at Victor's journal and responds:

Leonardo:	Yo no soy un árbol tampoco. No soy nada.	I am not a tree either. I am nothing.
Victor:	Ya no. Eres un niño.	Not any more. You are a boy.
Leonardo:	¡No soy nada!	I am nothing!
(Victor comes over to Arthur and Leonardo's table and shows them his journal entry.)		
Victor:	(in a pleading tone) Oye Leonardo te hice como un niño.	Listen L, I made you like a boy.
Arthur:	Una niña.	A girl.
Leonardo:	(to Victor) ¡Oye! ¡Tú eres una niña!	Listen! You are a girl!
Victor:	¡Vas a verlo!	You're gonna get it!
Leonardo:	¡NO! El (points to Arthur) lo dijo.	NO! He (points to A) said it.
Arthur:	Ha Ha!	Ha Ha!
Victor:	Oh yeah? I'm gonna draw you a sun.	Oh yeah? I'm gonna draw you a sun.
Victor begins to sound out Arthur's name next to the sun he drew.		
Victor:	Ar-thur. Arthur. Arthur you are a sun. Hey Arthur, I drew you as a sun. If you draw me as a girl I will tell the teacher.	Ar-thur. Arthur. Arthur you are a sun. Hey Arthur, I drew you as a sun. If you draw me as a girl I will tell the teacher. 2/4/08

It seems that this time, Victor is trying to make contact with Leonardo to repair his social status. He shows the new version of his drawing to Leonardo who is now depicted as a boy. Leonardo misinterprets the drawing and believes that Victor has drawn him as a tree. Consequently, Leonardo rejects Victor's attempt to make amends with him and says, "I am not a tree either. I am nothing." Victor insists that Leonardo is a boy in his drawing. In a pleading tone he says, "Listen Leonardo, I made you like a boy." Arthur counters Victor's statement by suggesting that he has drawn Leonardo as a girl. This power play appears to sabotage Victor's effort to reconcile with Leonardo and sets off and a series of events. First, Leonardo insults Victor by calling him a girl. Next Victor threatens Leonardo with a "You're gonna get it!" This statement causes Leonardo to back down from his insult and to blame Arthur for the insult. Interestingly, Arthur does not deny that he is to blame for the offense. Instead, he laughs, which seems to make Victor upset. Victor's response, "Oh yeah?" followed by "I'm gonna draw you a sun" is an attempt to strike back with an insult of his own. Victor begins to draw Arthur into his composition as a sun. Arthur does not respond to Victor's comment. However, it seems that Victor does not interpret his silence as a victory. He decides to warn Arthur, perhaps to keep him from attempting a retaliation. He says, "If you draw me as a girl I will tell the teacher." The interaction ends when Faith announces that it is time to line up and go to lunch.

Some of Faith's classroom management techniques in the official classroom world created hierarchical power relations between students. One such method was the assignment of table leaders. Faith selected a table leader for each group of students at the

beginning of every school day. According to Faith, the duties of the table leader included passing out supplies to group members, keeping students on task when group work was assigned, volume control, and to monitor peers' restroom use. When students engaged in face-to-face interactions as they composed alongside their friends, they often contested the social positions created by Faith in the official school world. As seen in the following exchange, Cosme attempts an overt power play by announcing that he is the leader of the table.

Cosme:	I'm the leader of this table.	
Arthur:	No. I'm the leader.	
Cosme:	No, we're gonna change the leader.	
Patricia:	I can be the leader for this –	
Cosme:	Uh-uh. You're not going to be the leader.	
Alvaro:	Whose gonna be? Arthur?	
Cosme:	No. Yo sé quien va ser.	No. I know who it's gonna be.
Patricia:	¿Quien?	Who?
Arthur:	Yo sé quien va ser.	I know who it's gonna be.
Cosme:	Voy a ser yo.	It's gonna be me.
Patricia:	Yo.	Me.
Arthur:	A que no.	Are not.
Patricia:	First him (points to Arthur) and first me –	
Cosme:	No. First me, then Arthur, then Alvaro and then Patricia. Tu al último porque –	You at the end because –
Patricia:	//First him!	

Cosme:	//tu eres la mujer y los hombres primero.	you are the woman and the men first.
Patricia:	First me and then him and then you –	
Cosme:	¡No! Primero Arthur, luego yo, luego Alvaro y luego tu.	No. First Arthur, then me, then Alvaro and then you.
		(Writing Center, 10/15/07)

Cosme kicks off the discussion by stating that he is the leader of his table even though he has not been assigned the role of table leader by Faith. Arthur, who is the designated table leader, refutes Cosme's claim by reminding him that he is the leader. He says, "No, I'm the leader." Cosme publicly announces that there is going to be a new leader. He uses the phrase "we're gonna change the leader" to suggest that the whole group will decide who the new leader is going to be. However his next utterances indicate otherwise. Cosme positions himself at the very top of the social ladder by informing his peers that he is the new table leader. Patricia contests Cosme's self-appointed position by saying that she is the new table leader and that she and Arthur are "first" in the group. This power play triggers Cosmse to assign each of his group members a position in the group. He assigns himself the top position and assigns Patricia the lowest position in the group saying, "…You at the end because you are the woman and the men first." Patricia attempts to assume a higher position in the group but Cosme refuses to back down. In the end, Patricia is silenced by Cosme and spends the rest of journal time working quietly on her individual composition.

As illustrated in this section, some power plays were carried out in the midst of children's conversations and never entered into the composing process. For example,

Cosme's attempt to position himself as the leader did not directly influence the written text he was composing. However, other times, power plays that were initiated in face-to-face interactions carried over into children's written compositions. The following journal entry was completed one October morning after Leticia told Rosalva, "Stop bothering me. You're not my friend."

"Mai (my) Best frend (friend) is Jasmin and Lourdes and rosalva the ugli (ugly) grl (girl) and luzer (loser)."

Figure 3. Leticia's written power play

While this particular power play was initiated orally, it did not unfold in the students' talk like the other examples that have been presented thus far. As soon as Leticia said, "Stop bothering me. You're not my friend," the interaction between the

girls ended. Both girls spent the remaining portion of journal time composing in silence. Instead, Leticia used her journal entry to exert power over Rosalva. Leticia wrote, "My best friend is Jasmin and Lourdes and Rosalva the ugly girl and loser." Leticia did not keep what she had written a secret. When she was finished, Leticia held up her journal and showed it to Rosalva. Timidly, Rosalva asked, "What does it say?" Without missing a beat Leticia responded, "It says that you are ugly and a loser" (Field note, 10/29/07).

Establishing Solidarity: "Pobrecito Leonardo"

Although students spent time trying to establish power and control over their peers, they also attempted to establish bonds with their friends. As students interacted with their peers during journal time and writing center time, they also established solidarity amongst the group of students they wrote alongside. As suggested in other studies, (e.g., Dyson, 1993; Lomangino et al, 1999) students created connections with their peers in their mundane conversations with peers. For example, in the next interaction, Alex initiates a seemingly ordinary interaction at the writing center that prompts his peers to focus on their writing task. He says:

Alex:	What are we gonna do?	
Alvaro:	A bird or something?	
Alex:	No, no. Texas?	
Leonardo:	Si, yo voy a hacer un –	Yes, I am going to make a –
Alvaro:	¡Una mapa!	A map!
Leonardo:	No, yo voy a hacer un delfín.	No, I'm going to make a dolphin.
Alex:	¿Delfín?	Dolphin?

Leonardo:	Yo voy a hacer un delfín.	I am going to make a dolphin.
Alvaro:	Yo un punto.	Me a period.
Alex:	¿Un punto? Yo voy a hacer un heart. Yo voy a hacer un heart.	A period? I am going to make a heart. I am going to make a heart. (Writing Center, 9/25/07)

Alex's first utterance, "What are we gonna do?" sets the tone for the brief exchange and suggests that he views the writing center as a collaborative space. To begin with, Alex uses the word *we* in his question, signaling that what they have to "do" is a group effort. Also, Alex addresses his question to the entire group, as opposed to asking a specific person. By doing so, Alex positions all of his peers as competent colleagues and kicks off a brainstorming session among the students at the writing center. As the initiator of the brainstorming session, Alex could have taken a leadership role in the group. However, it appears that Alex does not assume a position of power. Rather, he takes on the role of facilitator, creating a harmonious and equitable space for his peers to share their ideas.

Displays of empathy also strengthened the emotional bonds established between students during writing activities. In the following conversation, Lourdes and Alex attempt to comfort their peer after he shares some bad news during journal writing.

Leonardo:	My fish died.	
Alex:	Yes.	
Lourdes:	There he is. Aw. Pobrecito el pescado.	There he is. Aw. Poor fish.
Alex:	Se murió su pez.	His fish died.
Lourdes:	Pobrecito Leonardo.	Poor Leonardo.

Leonardo:	Se llamaba Leonardo Jr.	His name was Leonardo Jr.
Lourdes:	¿Leonardo Jr.? ¿Y tu Leonardo?	Leonardo Jr? And you Leonardo?
Leonardo:	Me llamo Leonardo nada más.	My name is just Leonardo.
^^^		
Lourdes:	Yo quiero una tortuga. (pointing to the aquarium) ¡AY! Lo van a hechar al mar.	I want a turtle. OH! (pointing to the aquarium) They are going to throw it in the sea.
Cosme:	Lo van a hechar al toilet.	They are going to throw it in the toilet.
Lourdes:	Si. Lo van a ***flochar***. Dile "Bye" Leonardo porque se va ir al drenaje.	Yes. They are going to flush it. Say "Bye" Leonardo because it's going to go down the drain.
Leonardo:	No. Se va ir a la tubería.	No. It's going to go down the pipes.
Leonardo puts his head down on the table.		
Lourdes:	Bueno Leonardo. Va salir en mí baño. Va salir en mi baño y voy a meter mi mano así. Lo agarro y te lo meto en mi agua y va estar ahí.	Okay Leonardo. It's going to come out in my restroom. It's going to come out in my restroom and I'm going to put my hand in like this. I'll get it and I will put it in my water for you and it's going to be there.
^^^		
Leonardo gets up and goes to the aquarium.		
Alex:	Pobrecito Leonardo.	Poor Leonardo.
Lourdes:	Si porque no va tener su pescado.	Yes because he is not going to have his fish.
		(Journal Time, 2/11/08)

In the midst of their individual composing, Leonardo announces that his pet fish is dead. Lourdes responds sympathetically by saying, “Poor fish” and “Poor Leonardo.” Even though Leonardo initiated the conversation in English, Lourdes chooses to offer her sympathy in the language that she and Leonardo are most comfortable speaking. While Lourdes, Leonardo and Alex are conversing about the dead fish, Faith attempts to remove the fish from Leonardo’s aquarium. Lourdes notices what Faith is doing and informs Leonardo. However, instead of saying that Faith is flushing the fish down the toilet, she tells Leonardo that the teacher is going to throw it in the sea. Cosme corrects Lourdes and says that the dead fish is going to get flushed down the toilet. Lourdes agrees with Cosme and recommends that Leonardo say his final farewell to the fish. Leonardo puts his head down on the table and is visibly upset. It seems that Lourdes picks up on his sadness and once again displays compassion for Leonardo by suggesting that she will rescue his fish from the toilet. She says, “It’s going to come out in my restroom and I’m going to put my hand in like this. I’ll get it and I will put it in my water for you and it’s going to be there.” Leonardo gets up and leaves the table and goes to look at his aquarium. Interestingly, Alex decides to voice his sympathy for Leonardo when Leonardo is not around to acknowledge his words. He says, “Poor Leonardo,” and Lourdes agrees by telling Alex that she feels sorry for Leonardo because “...he is not going to have his fish.”

In some instances, solidarity was established by displays of empathy. However, students also demonstrated solidarity when they transformed their individual compositions into co-constructed texts. As the children in Faith’s classroom worked on their individual compositions, they often solicited peer input. In the following

conversation, Alex asks Leonardo to comment on his drawing. This invitation creates an opportunity for the boys to work collaboratively on a text.

Alex:	(holding up his journal) ¡Leonardo! ¡Tú y yo! ¿Te gusta?	Leonardo! You and me! You like?
Leonardo:	Sí pero yo hice una tarea de Victor y yo que yo lo maté con una alma poderosa.	Yes but I did some work of Victor and me that I killed him with a powerful soul.
^^^		
Alex:	¡Espérate! Yo y Leonardo estamos peleando.	Wait! Leonardo and I are fighting!
Leonardo:	¡Oye! ¡Soy tu amigo!	Listen! I'm your friend!
Alex:	Sí pero tu y yo no peleamos. Nosotros peleamos con otros que son malos.	Yes but you and I don't fight. We fight with others who are bad.
Leonardo:	¡Oye! ¡Oye! ¿Cuál soy yo? ¿Este o éste o éste?	Listen! Listen! Which one am I? This one or this one or this one?
Alex:	Donde dice tu nombre.	Where it says your name.
Leonardo:	¿Aquí?	Here?
Alex:	Ese eres y yo soy ese.	You are that one and I am that one.
Leonardo:	¿Por qué no escribes los nombres de los malos?	Why don't you write the bad guys names?
Alex:	A pues yo no sé como se llaman. ¿Tú sabes?	Well, I don't know what their names are. Do you?
Leonardo:	Pues ponle a uno que se llame Rico Malo.	Well put that one is named Rich Bad Guy.
Alex and Leonardo laugh.		
Alex:	¡Rico Malo es un chistoso nombre!	Rich Bad Guy is a funny name!
^^^		

Alex:	Yo soy amigo de todos. Yo voy a hacer a Lourdes –	I am friends with everyone. I am going to make Lourdes –
Leonardo:	¿Peleando contigo?	Fighting with you?
Alex:	No. ¿Peleando? Sí, andaba –	No. Fighting? Yes, she was –
Leonardo:	(to Lourdes) Van a hacer de ti. Lourdes, te van a hacer –	They are going to make you. Lourdes, they are going to make –
Lourdes:	No, dibújame a mí y a mi hermano peleando.	No, draw me and my brother fighting.
Alex:	No.	No.
Leonardo:	¡Oye! ¡Vamos a pelear con mujeres!	Listen! Let's fight with girls!
Alex:	Si porque mi dibujo es de peleas.	Yes because my drawing is about fighting. (Writing Center, 1/31/07)

Alex's first utterance accomplishes two things. His first statement lets Leonardo know that Alex has drawn him into his composition. Alex follows this statement with a question. He asks Leonardo, "You like?" in order to get his friend's impression about his composition. Leonardo responds positively to Alex's composition but he does not give any substantive feedback. Instead, he tells Alex about his own work. Alex provides Leonardo with a little more information about his text. He says, "Wait! Leonardo and I are fighting!" This time, Leonardo seems more interested in Alex's drawing because it appears that he has misinterpreted Leonardo's words. He thinks that Alex has drawn a picture of them fighting each other and he responds by saying, "Listen! I'm your friend!" Alex clarifies the misunderstanding and informs Leonardo that he has drawn them fighting against bad guys. Leonardo asks, "Which one am I?" and Alex tells him that he

is “where it says your name.” While Alex has labeled Leonardo and himself in his drawing, he has not labeled the bad guys. Alex questions him about the missing labels and Alex responds by saying, “Well, I don’t know what their names are. Do you?” This utterance is a request for peer input and Leonardo readily responds by suggesting that Leonardo call one of the bad guys Rich Bad Guy.

As the interaction progresses, Leonardo begins to give Alex unsolicited input. Alex announces that he is going to draw Lourdes on his paper and Leonardo makes an inadvertent suggestion when he asks Alex if Lourdes is going to be fighting with him. At first, Alex says no but then he changes his mind. Lourdes enters the interaction and tells Alex to draw her fighting with her brother but Alex rejects the idea. Leonardo speaks next and offers Alex another suggestion. He says, “Listen! Let’s fight with girls!” This utterance changes the nature of the interaction. First, it gives Leonardo the chance to establish a connection with Alex by proposing that they team up and fight against two girls. Alex accepts his peer’s proposal and by doing so, solidifies the union between the boys. Second, Leonardo’s suggestion creates an opportunity for him to change his role in the interaction. Leonardo goes from audience member to co-author as seen in this next segment of talk.

Alex:	Yo le gané a Leticia.	I beat Leticia.
Lourdes:	Y yo le gané a Leonardo.	And I beat Leonardo.
Alex & Leo:	¡NO!	
Leonardo:	(to Lourdes) Yo te gané a ti. Te dí un golpe en el ojo así (demonstrates using his fist). Tantas veces. (turns to Alex) Oye. ¿Sabes qué? Le dí a Lourdes bastantes veces unos golpes en el ojo así. Y se le	I beat you. I hit you in the eye like this. Lots of times. Listen. You know what? I hit Lourdes lots of time in the eye like this. And her

	hizo grande y luego le dí un golpe en el cachete así. Mira y luego tantos golpes en el cuerpo.	eye got big and then I hit her on the cheek like this. Look and then lots of hits on her body.
Lourdes:	Mi hermano me quiere pegar.	My brother wants to hit me.
Alex:	Y yo le dí nada mas una patada a Leticia y ella perdió.	And I only gave Leticia one kick and she lost.
Leonardo:	Y le pegué a ella, a Lourdes con una patada en su cara.	And I hit her, Lourdes with a kick on her face.
Lourdes:	Y yo le dí a él –	And I gave him –
Alex:	Ella es el *red super power*. Pero ella perdió.	She is the *red super power*. But she lost.
Leonardo:	Se murió	She died.

As the boys talk, they begin to co-construct a story to go along with the picture that Alex drew. In their story, both boys fight with two of their female classmates and win. Both Leonardo and Alex detail the way in which they "beat" their female opponents. Leonardo says that he hits Lourdes repeatedly in the eye, on her cheek and on her body while Alex says that he won his fight against Leticia by kicking her once. It appears that Lourdes, who is now a character in the boys' oral composition, does not like their story. She attempts to change the storyline by suggesting that she beats Leonardo. The boys' solidarity is quite apparent in their response. In unison, they reject Lourdes's comment and continue to discard her suggestions until the end of the interaction.

During official writing activities, the children in Faith's classroom negotiated their social status by interacting with others in two different ways. At times, children engaged in power plays. In these kinds of interactions, children tried to position

themselves at the top of the social ladder by insulting their peers, manipulating relationships and by claiming their superiority over others. Conversely, the participants also spent a considerable amount of time establishing connections with their peers. The children did so through displays of empathy and by collaborating with peers. Displays of solidarity created opportunities for students to support one another, both emotionally and academically. The bonding that resulted from these displays of camaraderie also established the writing center and journal time as safe spaces to explore topics that were prohibited in the official school world. The next section will demonstrate interactions characterized by the discussion of unmentionable topics.

Discussion of Unmentionable Topics

As suggested by Tobin (1997), "For young children, making butt jokes, talking about a classmate as being 'like a girl,' playing doctor, and engaging in kissing games are not unusual or strange events needing special explanations or meriting special celebration" (p. 12). Nonetheless, these events are often unwelcomed or even prohibited in early childhood classrooms. Faith's classroom was no exception. In the official classroom world, Faith banished conversational topics and behaviors that she deemed "uncomfortable," "offensive," and inappropriate." Faith shared these unmentionable topics with me and her reasons for banning them in her classroom. As articulated by Faith during one of our informal conversations:

> Topics that are not allowed are those that are offensive to any child. That could be religion, because we all practice different religions. It could be name-calling, that's not appropriate. Anything that could ostracize a child, make them feel like they are different would not be a topic or conversation that I would want to hear in the classroom. Also, in the classroom we should not be talking about children's bodies and how they are growing and changing because I don't want to infringe on parents' rights and whether or not they feel comfortable with those

> sorts of conversations…I also don't want students talking about bodily functions because I am trying to teach the children manners and to a certain extent there is an opportunity in the classroom. And so I teach them that there are certain things you don't talk about in public…(Informal Conversation, 12/12/07)

Faith also banned the use of disrespectful language in her classroom. For example, when Cosme was talking about "pooping" and called one of his peer's "poo poo head," Faith told him the following:

> You know what? It's really not a bad word. It's something that we all do but we don't talk about it. Do you understand that? We don't talk about it. It's kinda something we don't discuss. If it's not good then we don't talk about it…That's something that you have to talk to your mom about. Not here in the class…Entonces, es algo que hablamos en casa con mami. De esas cosas. Ne se va decir aquí en el salón. (Journal Time, 12/12/07)

In order to teach students that there are "certain things you don't talk about in public," Faith often redirected undesirable conversations and behaviors and reprimanded students who repeatedly engaged in objectionable dialogue. Consequently, students refrained from such talk in Faith's presence and resorted to exploring unmentionable topics as they wrote alongside their peers at the writing center and during journal time. Illicit conversations among students were characterized by the following verbal and nonverbal cues: whispering, crouched posture and giggling. In the following exchange, Lourdes initiates an illicit conversation with her peers. Whispering, she says:

Lourdes:	<u>*One time*</u>, una vez mi papá se bañó conmigo y mi papá dijo, "Me voy a quitar el calzón" –	<u>*One time*</u>, one time my dad bathed with me and my dad said, "I am going to take off my underwear" –
Arthur:	OHHHHH!	OHHHH!
(Alex and Arthur laugh hard.)		
Arthur:	¡El calzón, tu papá!	The underwear, your dad!

Alex:	Yo siempre me quito los –	I always take off –
Lourdes:	Y tenía dos.	And [he] had two.
Alex:	*shorts* y la playera.	my *shorts* and shirt.
(Arthur comes over and whispers to Lourdes. Lourdes giggles.)		
Arthur:	Yo todos los días me quito las dos camisas.	Everyday I take off both my shirts.
Lourdes:	OOOOOH!	OOOOOH!
(Alex laughs hard.)		
Lourdes:	Yo siempre me quito la camisa cuando me estoy bañando.	I always take off my shirt when I am bathing.
Alex:	Yo siempre hago eso. //Pero a veces me baño en calzón.	I always do that. But sometimes I bathe in underwear.
Arthur:	//Yo a veces me baño con mis zapatos. Yo me baño con mis zapatos.	Sometimes I bathe with my shoes. I bathe with my shoes.
Lourdes:	Yo siempre cuando tengo un sticker me baño con el. Le pongo glue.	When I have a sticker, I always bathe with it. I put glue on it. (Journal time, 2/6/08)

Lourdes initiates the illicit conversation by telling her peers about a time when her dad bathed with her and said, "I am going to take off my underwear." Lourdes whispers her first utterance, signaling that the conversation should not be heard by her teacher or those outside her table group. Both of Lourdes' peers laugh in response to her comment and continue to talk about undressing. Alex tells his peers that he always takes off his shirt and his shorts while Arthur says that he always takes off both of his shirts. Lourdes

follows and tells the boys that she takes off her shirt when she bathes. In this particular case, the children successfully explore an unmentionable topic without the teacher's interference. In the next example, Rodrigo and Cosme explore another unmentionable topic at the writing center. In this case, the boys explore the human anatomy through a co-constructed composition. The interaction begins as they boys discuss a former peer who they describe as being "*bien gordote* (very fat)."

Rodrigo:	¿Un niño que estaba con Ms. Pérez y también nosotros verdad? ¡'Ta bien gordote!	A boy who was with Ms. Perez and also with us right? He's very fat!
Cosme laughs.		
Cosme:	Ira. 'Ta así. Ira. (draws a big circle with his finger on the table) Estaba así como el tamaño de la mesa verdad?	Look. He's like this. Look. (draws a big circle with his finger) He was like this like the size of the table right?
Rodrigo:	¿Como un círculo verdad?	Like a circle right?
Comse:	Así está mira. Estaba así ira. ¿Te enseño cómo?	He's like this look. He was like this look. Do I show you how?
Rodrigo nods his head.		
Cosme:	Ira.	Look.
Cosme draws a blue circle on his paper.		
^^^ Rodrigo draws a big circle on his paper.		
Rodrigo:	¡Así! (giggles) ¡Así! (continues to draw) ¿Así verdad?	Like this! (giggles) Like this! (continues to draw) Like this right?
Cosme:	¡Si! (nods his head) ¡'Taba gordote así! (uses his arms to show how fat) Muy gordo.	Yes! (nods his head) He was fat like this! (uses his arms to show how fat) Very fat.

In order to demonstrate how overweight their former peer is, the boys draw him on a sheet of paper. Rodrigo giggles nervously as he draws. As they continue to talk, the boys' drawing becomes a bit more graphic. Cosme begins to draw body parts. He says:

Cosme:	¿A ver? ¡'Ta bien gordote!	Can I see? He's very fat!
Cosme and Rodrigo giggle.		
Comse:	(crouches down in his chair and whispers) Y luego los chichis.	(whispering) And then the boobies.
Both boy laugh loudly. Rodrigo draws two circles in the chest area (presumably "boobies") and a belly button to his picture and then Cosme gets the paper and draws a penis. Patricia watches the boys as they draw.		
Patricia:	Están dibujando donde hace del baño.	They are drawing where he goes to the restroom.
The boys laugh.		
Cosme:	Y luego la colilla.	And then the butt.
Cosme draws a butt on the picture and both boys laugh.		
Rodrigo:	Y se hecho un pedo así (makes a noise with his mouth and draws scribbles to show the fart on his composition).	And he farted like this (makes a noise with his mouth and draws scribbles to show the fart on his composition).
Cosme laughs.		
		(Writing Center, 2/2/08)

Once again, a child's nonverbal cues signal that they are discussing something that is off limits in the classroom. Before Cosme tells Rodrigo to draw "boobies," he crouches down in his chair. He also lowers his voice and whispers. As the boys draw, Patricia

examines the boys' illustration. She says, "They are drawing where he goes to the restroom." The boys appear to be pleased with her comment because they burst out in laughter and continue to draw. Cosme draws a "butt" and then makes a scribble to show that the boy is "farting." Figure 4 below is the boys' co-constructed text.

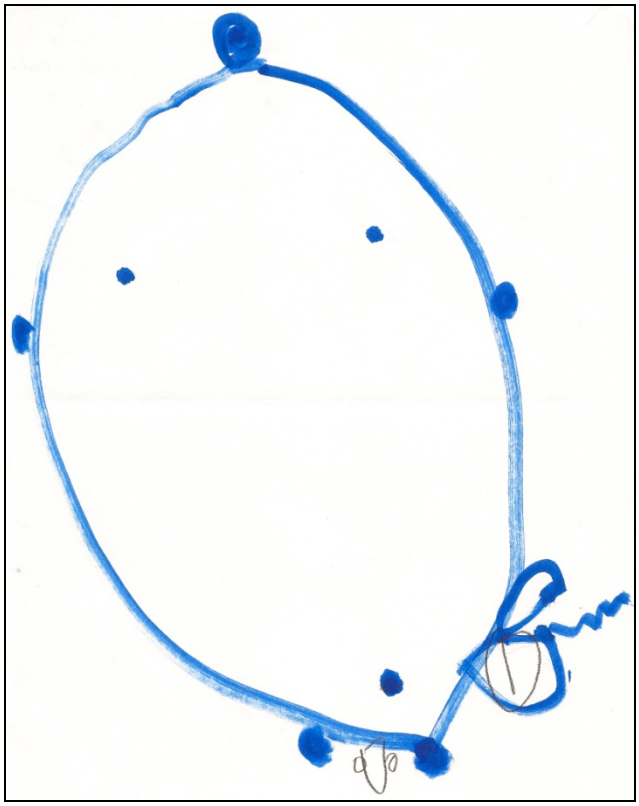


Figure 4. A "naughty" text

While the use of offensive language was prohibited in Faith's classroom, students often explored the abstract notion of "bad words" as they wrote alongside their peers. The children in Faith's classroom used the term "bad word" to refer to an inappropriate word that was off limits in the classroom. However, this term was problematic because it appeared that the children in Faith's class had different notions about what constituted a bad word. The following interaction will illustrate this point.

Cosme:	¡Enseñó sus pompis también!	He showed his bottom also!
Alex laughs.		
Victor:	A que no. A que no Cosme.	That's not true. That's not true Cosme.
Patricia:	¡YYYYYY!	
Cosme:	That's not even a bad word! That's something you have! But that's not the real name. The real name is *cola*!	
Arthur laughs.		
Arthur:	(whispering) The real name is butt.	
Cosme giggles.		
Arthur:	The real name is coco.	
Cosme:	The real name is Arthur.	
Arthur:	The real name is coconut.	
Cosme:	The real name is Patricia.	
Patricia:	The real name is Cosme.	
Cosme:	The real name is Patricia poo poo head.	
Patricia:	OOOOOOO! (her eyes get big)	
Cosme:	Patrica is poo poo.	
Arthur:	I'm telling Ms. Treviño.	
(Arthur leaves the table)		

In his first utterance, Cosme uses the word *pompis*, a more polite version of the word *butt* in Spanish. Patricia appears to be offended by his word choice and Cosme responds to her "YYYYYYY!" by defending his words. He informs Patricia that the word *pompis* is

not a bad word, “It’s something you have.” He also tells Patricia that the “real name” for *pompis* is *cola.* *Cosme’s* utterance prompts a game-like exchange where each student announces what “the real name is.” In one of his turns at talk, Cosme changes the nature of the game by using the phrase “poo poo head” to insult Patricia. He says, “The real name is Patricia poo poo head.” Patricia’s eyes get big and she responds by saying, “OOOOOO!” However, Cosme does not take back the insult. In fact, he restates his insult and says that Patricia is “poo poo.” While Patricia appears to be offended by Cosme’s remark, it is Arthur who goes and tells the teacher what Cosme said. It seems that Arthur also thinks that Cosme’s words are inappropriate. Arthur returns to the table and says:

Arthur:	She’s gonna talk to you.	
Faith:	¿Estas usando palabras que no se pueden usar aquí en la clase? Le debes una disculpa a tu mesa. Porque ellos no vienen a la escuela a escuchar esas palabras. Por favor. A ellos.	Are you using words that cannot be used here in class? You owe your table an apology. Because they don’t come to school to listen to those words. Please. [Apologize] to them.
Cosme:	Sorry.	
Faith:	Thank you.	
Faith leaves.		
Cosme:	(in a lowered tone) It’s not even a bad word.	
Gerardo:	(to Patricia) He said a bad word. Right?	
Cosme:	No. Poo poo is not a bad word.	
Arthur:	Awww! Again. (to the teacher) HE SAID	

	IT AGAIN!	
Cosme:	I said it's not a bad word!	(Writing Center, 12/12/07)

In this particular case, the illicit conversation comes to an end because Faith intervenes. Faith asks Cosme to apologize to his peers for using inappropriate language and Cosme complies. When Faith leaves, Cosme mumbles under his breath, "It's not even a bad word." However, Gerardo and Arthur disagree. Arthur attempts to tell the teacher that Cosme is still saying a bad word. Angry and frustrated, Cosme yells, "I said it's not a bad word!"

While the writing center and journal time were two official classroom activities, the children often transformed these spaces in order to suit their needs. The data revealed that students needed opportunities to explore topics that were forbidden in the larger classroom context and chose to do so in the midst of composing written texts. In the comfort of their peer world, the children tackled a variety of unmentionable topics and engaged in forbidden acts (e.g., saying "bad words," drawing "*chichis*" and a "*colilla*"). According to Corsaro (2003), children frequently engage in behaviors that are prohibited in the adult world as a way to gain establish solidarity amongst members of the peer group. "Once kids begin to see themselves as part of a group," Cosaro writes, "the mere doing of something forbidden and getting away with it is valued in peer culture" (Cosaro, 2003, p. 142).

Play

Play was an important medium through which the children in Faith's classroom explored both written and oral language. Playful interactions that took place at the

writing center and during journal time could be divided into the following subcategories: games and the exploration of concrete literacy tools. At times, the children's play directly related to the composing process. However, on other occasions, the play was a tool used to accomplish social goals.

Games

As suggested by Frost, Wortham & Reifel (2005), children in classroom settings frequently engage in peer culture play that may include games and chants. The children in Faith's classroom enjoyed playing games with their peers as they wrote in their journals and at the writing center. Most of the games that they played were invented by the students themselves. When playing games, the children assumed and assigned each various positional identities. The initiator of the game usually introduced the rules and objectives of the game. By doing so, the initiator positioned the other children as participants. For the most part, children usually accepted this sort of positioning. Yet every once in a while a student rejected being positioned as a game participant and let his or her peers know.

One of the most popular games played both at the writing center and during journal time was the "Who Farted?" game. This game occurred frequently and was played by the majority of the children at one time or another. In the following example, Lourdes and Alex are busily working at the writing center. Suddenly, Lourdes looks over at Alex and pinches her nose. Alex follows and says:

Alex:	Huele bien feo. <u>*Oh my God*</u>.	It smells very bad. <u>*Oh my God.*</u>
Lourdes:	Yo no fui.	It wasn't me.

Alex:	Yo tampoco.	Me either.
Lourdes:	El último es el que ***farted***. El que –	The last one is who ***farted***. The one –
Alex:	You farted!	
Lourdes:	A que no. El que diga ***paper***. Si no dicen ***paper***, si no dicen ***paper***, ganan.	Uh-uh. The one that says ***paper***. If you don't say ***paper***, if you don't say ***paper***, you win.
Alex:	Paper.	
Lourdes:	You farted.	
Alex:	A que no.	I didn't.
Lourdes:	(holding up a pencil) El que diga esa palabra. El que diga esa palabra ***farted***. (silence) Ay. ¡Leonardo se salvó!	(holding up a pencil) The one who says this word. The one who says this word ***farted***. (silence) Oh. Leonardo saved himself!
Alex:	Ya se fue el pedo.	The fart is gone. (Writing Center, 2/8/08)

In this interaction, both Lourdes and Alex agree that "it smells bad" and they both quickly clarify that they are not responsible for the bad smell. Lourdes initiates the game by saying, "The last one is who farted." Alex willingly accepts being positioned as a game participant and listens to Lourdes as she explains the rules of the game. In this particular version, participants follow directions given by the initiator of the game in order to figure out "who farted." For example, in one of her turns at talk Lourdes says, "The one who says paper. If you don't say paper, if you don't say paper, you win." Confused by her directions, Alex responds by saying, "paper" and Lourdes immediately announces that Alex is the one "who farted." The children play another round of the

game. This time, Lourdes decides that whoever says the word "pencil" is the culprit. The participants stay quiet and no one loses. Suddenly, Alex decides to end the game. He informs Lourdes that the "fart is gone."

Another game that was played repeatedly both at the writing center and during journal time was the "One-Up" game. As the name implies, the goal of this particular game was to outdo peers in the midst of composing. On some occasions, children tried to top their peers verbally while other times, the students tried to one-up each other through their writing. In the following exchange, Alex, Lourdes and Arthur engage in a one-up game as they write in their journals.

Alex:	Yo voy a hacer ***detail***.	I'm going to do ***detail***.
Lourdes:	Yo también voy a hacer ***detail.***	I am also going to do ***detail***.
Alex:	Yo mas.	Me more.
Lourdes:	Yo mas. Más que todo el mundo.	Me more. More than the whole world.
Arthur:	Yo más que todo el cielo.	Me more than all the sky.
Lourdes:	Yo más que todo el espacio.	Me more than all of outer space.
Alex:	¡Yo más que todos!	Me more than everyone!
Lourdes:	Yo más que todas las cosas del mundo.	Me more than all the things in the world.
Alex:	Yo más que todo el mundo.	Me more than the whole world.
Arthur:	Yo también. Yo gane.	Me too. I won.
Lourdes:	Yo más que todas las cosas que hay aquí.	Me more than all the things that are here.

	(Journal Time, 2/12/08)

As previously mentioned, Mrs. Treviño laid out general writing guidelines that included adding detail to illustrations and to written texts. In this interaction, Alex chooses to inform his peers that he is complying with this particular expectation. He says, "I'm going to do detail." Lourdes speaks next and tells the group that she is also going to "do detail." At this point in the exchange, the children are not trying to outdo each other. Both Alex and Lourdes are just sharing their writing plans. It is not until Arthur speaks that the nature of the interaction changes. He says, "Me more," which actually initiates the one-up game. Lourdes immediately positions herself as a game participant. She says, "Me more. More than the whole world." Arthur tries to beat Lourdes' statement by saying, "Me more than all the sky." Lourdes speaks next and attempts to top Arthur. She tells the boys, "Me more than all of outer space." Alex joins in the game and tries to one-up both Lourdes and Arthur. He exclaims, "Me more than everyone." The children continue to one-up each other each time they speak until Arthur attempts to end the game by announcing, "I won."

Game-playing was a common occurrence at the writing center and during journal time. As the previous examples suggest, interactions characterized by game-playing did not always relate directly to the writing process. For instance, the "Who Farted?" game initiated by Lourdes had nothing to do with what the students were writing about. Nor was it reflected in the children's final products. Nonetheless, interactions of this nature appeared to serve an important purpose – the establishment of solidarity. By

strengthening social relationships, students were creating a support system that ultimately played an important role in the writing process. As suggested by Rowe (1994):

> Although talk about social relationships might, at first glance, seem unrelated to authoring activities, friendship negotiations indirectly supported the text production activities of those in the group…Group solidarity and acknowledged friendship relationships supported authoring by increasing the chances children would get positive responses when asking for help, materials, or evaluation of their work. (p. 118).

The influence of peer interactions on children's written products will be further explored in the next chapter.

Exploration of Concrete Literacy Tools

Concrete literacy tools were tangible objects/materials that the students used to compose texts in the writing center and during journal time. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Faith provided students with the following literacy tools during journal time: crayons, erasers and pencils. At the writing center, students had a wider range of materials to choose from. Concrete literacy tools at this center included: markers (e.g., fine-tip, scented), crayons, pencil colors, pens, pencils, paper (e.g., lined, colored, white, manila), envelopes, index cards, notepads, sentence strips and picture cards. While Faith spent a considerable amount of time both modeling and explaining the teacher approved functions and purposes of the various literacy tools that were provided during writing activities, the children often explored these concrete literacy tools and assigned them alternate uses. Consider the following vignette:

One September afternoon, Faith announces that she will be walking around and observing students as they work in their assigned literacy centers. Sonia, Victor, Miguel and Leticia are assigned to the writing center. As they sit down and begin to gather their

writing tools, Sonia announces her plans to make a butterfly. She says, "Yo voy a hacer the butterfly." Sonia then grabs the picture cards and begins looking through them. Marco stops writing and watches Sonia as she attempts to shuffle the picture cards. He points to a picture card showing baby feet. Victor stops drawing and joins Marco in watching Sonia who is now playing with the cards. Sonia begins to make stacks with her picture cards and assigns each of her peers a set of cards. Faith approaches the writing center and notices that the students are not composing. She determines that Sonia is the culprit and re-directs her behavior. She tells Sonia not to pull out all of the picture cards and reminds her that the cards should only be used if she cannot figure out what to write about. Faith says, "Escoje una si no sabes de lo que vas a escribir. Se usan para la escritura." Sonia collects the cards from her peers and begins to put them away. However, as per Faith's instructions, she decides to keeps one card. Sonia sorts through the card stack and selects the picture card that says, "butterfly." She then places the card next to her paper and begins to draw. (Transcript, 9/20/07)

While Faith placed picture cards in the writing center to help students develop a storyline or to pick a writing topic, the students often used the picture cards to suit their own goals and needs. In this particular case, Sonia selected a writing topic (a butterfly), on her own, but decided to use the picture cards to help her draw her picture. However, in the midst of trying to find the card with the butterfly, she became side-tracked and began to use the picture cards as a play tool. Using the cards to initiate a game gave her the opportunity to connect with her peers and to achieve this new goal. Yet this playful encounter was cut short because Faith intervened. In the end, Sonia used the picture

cards as she initially intended. The butterfly picture card served as a model as she drew a butterfly on her page.

The previous example demonstrates one student's attempt to use a literacy tool in ways that were not approved by Faith. Like Sonia, many of the children in Faith's classroom used concrete literacy tools to support their play. In some cases, students used the literacy tools around them to create games. Other times, children utilized the tools in their pretend play. Similar to other studies that have examined the social nature of young children's composing (e.g., Dyson, 1989), pretend play was an integral component of the composing process in Faith's classroom. As children wrote in their journals and at the writing center, they weaved in and out of imaginary worlds where students established solidarity amongst their peers, planned written/drawn compositions and developed storylines. Frequently, the participants used the concrete literacy tools around them to support their make-believe play. For instance, pencils often became swords, wands or microphones, while markers were used to create towers and spaceships.

In the next example, Victor, Marco, Jasmin and Juan are at the writing center gathering their writing tools so they can begin to compose. Instead of using the markers to write or draw, Victor begins to play with the scented markers. He says:

Victor:	Tengo estos [marcadores] y tu no vas a tener nada. ¿Cual quieres usar? ¿Sandía o chicle?	I have these [markers] and you aren't going to have any. Which do you want to use? Watermelon or gum?
Marco:	Ese. El azul.	That one. The blue.
Victor tries to mark Marco with a marker. Faith tells him to stop and get back to work.		
Victor:	Mira. Se borra.	Look. It erases.

Victor licks his hands and rubs them together to show his peer that the marks he made on himself erase.		
Marco:	Te lo comiste. ¿Está rico?	You ate it. Is it delicious?
Victor nods his head "yes."		
Victor:	Es una paleta. Huélela.	It's a lollipop. Smell it.
^^^		
Juan:	Watch out. Jasmin got a marker.	
Jasmin pretends to lick the marker like it was a lollipop or a popsicle.		
Victor:	(to Jasmin) Hey! Le hiciste así. (Victor pretends to lick a marker) Yo te vi que le hiciste así.	(to Jasmin) Hey! You did it like this. (Victor pretends to lick a marker). I saw you do it like this.
Jasmin:	Uh-huh. Yo no más le hice así de mentira.	Uh-huh. I was just pretending.
Juan:	This one smells good.	
Jasmin:	Ira Marco. Así.	Look Marco. Like this.
Juan:	It smells like strawberry.	
Jasmin:	Uh-uh. It smells a *cereza*.	Uh-uh. It smells like cherry.
Marco:	A ver. Yo no lo olí.	Let's see. I didn't smell it.
Marco smells the marker.		
Marco:	Huele a cereza.	It smells like cherry.
Victor:	A ver Marco. UMMMM! Huele a chicle con medicina.	Let's see Marco. UMMMM! It smells like gum with medicine.
Jasmin:	A mí no me gusta la medicina. ¿A quién le	I don't like medicine. Who

	gusta la medicina?	likes medicine?
Victor:	A mí no.	Not me.
Marco:	Yo tampoco.	Me either.
Juan:	I don't like *medicina*.	I don't like medicine.
Jasmin:	Yo soy la doctora y les voy a dar esta medicina y se lo tienen que tomar.	I am the doctor and I am going to give you all this medicine and you have to drink it.
Jasmin passes out a scented marker to each of the boys. The children pretend the markers are medicine bottles. The boys open their mouths and shake the markers as if medicine was coming out of the makers.		
Victor:	¡Que fea sabe la medicina!	The medicine tastes bad!
Marco:	A mí me gusto.	I liked it.

While Victor, Marco, Juan and Jasmin know the intended function of the markers (to both write and draw), they choose to utilize these literacy tools in ways that serve their own needs. First, Victor uses a marker to write on his friend. This playful interaction does not last long because Faith notices and redirects Victor's behavior. Then, Victor pretends that one of the markers is a lollipop. Jasmin follows Victor's example and also uses the marker to pretend that she is licking a lollipop. Juan speaks next and tells his friends that the marker "smells good." A discussion ensues about the marker that "smells good." Juan thinks it smells like strawberry while Jasmin and Marco both agree that it smells like cherry. Victor says, "It smells like gum and medicine." Victor's statement initiates a play scenario based on the scented markers. Jasmin announces that she is a doctor and is going to give her peers medicine. Using the markers as pivots, the children pretend to drink their medicine.

Playful interactions occurred frequently as students composed in their journals and at the writing center. While the participants played with each other in different ways, all play-based interactions created opportunities for students to connect with their peers. By playing with each other in the midst of composing, the children in Faith's classroom were developing a support system that undoubtedly played a critical role in the composing process. This particular theme will be further explored in the next chapter.

Chapter Summary

Student interactions at the writing center and during journal time were shaped in part by the official classroom world (Dyson, 1993). While Faith created opportunities for her students to interact with each other as they explored written language, the interactions were restricted by several factors. At times, students' interactions were limited due to a lack of time. For example, journal time was frequently cut short due to changes in the daily schedule. Peer interactions during writing activities were also influenced by the students' strict seating arrangement. Children were assigned to a particular table and spent the majority of the day sitting with the same students. Consequently, most children engaged in conversations with peers who were in their vicinity. Interactions that occurred between children who were sitting at different tables occurred less frequently and were discouraged by the teacher.

Regardless of these constraints, students' interactions were varied and complex. Similar to other young writers in monolingual classroom settings, the bilingual kindergarteners in Faith's classroom positioned themselves and each other in ways that allowed them to display their capabilities, negotiate social status, explore unmentionable topics and engage in playful encounters with peers. However, unlike their monolingual

counterparts, the children in this classroom drew from their developing oral language skills in both English and Spanish as they conversed with their peers. The importance of this difference will be further explored in the upcoming chapters.

In addition to confirming the existing research on the social activity of young writers, this chapter serves as the foundation for findings that will be presented in the next chapter. This chapter reported on the different kinds of peer interactions that occurred in the midst of the composing process and alluded to the fact that students' interactions seemed to be related to the composing process. However, it did not directly focus on the written products that were created as children conversed with their peers. The following portion of the dissertation will illustrate the impact of face-to-face interactions on children's written texts. Two cases will be presented. Each case will showcase the positional moves of two students in order to demonstrate how peer interactions supported their writing and provided opportunities for literacy learning.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE CASES

As shown in the previous chapter, the students in Faith's classroom spent a considerable amount of time interacting with each other as they explored written language. The findings in Chapter Four alluded to the fact that at times, peer interactions related directly to the composing process while others did not. For example, interactions where peers assisted one another or enforced teacher expectations centered on what was being written/drawn at the time that the interaction took place. However, on other occasions, children's exchanges at the writing center and during journal time concentrated on resolving social issues and not on the composing process. For instance, at times children engaged in power plays or participated in games that created opportunities for them to negotiate their social status.

Although all of the students in Faith's classroom were interested in their peers, they varied in how they interacted with others at the writing center and during journal time. Reviews of the data suggested that these differences became more pronounced over time, as students' relationships with each other were solidified (Dyson, 1989). Thus, I purposefully selected one group of students and recorded their consecutive interactions during an extended period of time in order to learn more about the ways in which students' social interactions related to their written texts. My choice of focal children was based on several factors. First, I wanted to focus on a group that had students with varying language capabilities. The group of students I selected included Leonardo and Lourdes, two Spanish-dominant students, Arthur, an English-dominant student, Alex, a student whom I identified as being balanced in both languages, and Victor, an English dominant student who was not officially assigned to the group but who frequently

interacted with the other students in the group. I also chose to focus on these students because they displayed a wide range of interaction styles. Three of the students, Leonardo, Arthur and Victor, were very talkative and outgoing while Lourdes and Alex were more reserved. The research question that guided the analysis of the data was the following: How are peer interactions associated with written products?

Two cases will be presented in order to demonstrate the nuances of student interactions and how over time, these subtleties established interactional patterns that clearly shaped students' written products in very distinct ways. The first case will focus on the face-to-face interactions of two students whose language backgrounds were different – Leonardo (SD) and Victor (ED). This case will illustrate one particular path to peer support that afforded Leonardo and Victor the opportunity to learn about the multiple purposes of writing. Specifically, the children discovered that writing could be used as a social tool. The second case will focus on Lourdes, a Spanish dominant student and Alex, a balanced bilingual whose interactional history supported their writing as well. This case will show the ways in which the children used their daily conversations with each other as a writing tool. Each case study will be introduced with a brief description of each of the focal children.

Leonardo and Victor: "Tu eres un huevo de weenies"

Leonardo

Leonardo was a small vivacious child. During journal time, he was lively, noisy and very social. On many occasions, Leonardo attempted to involve his peers in pretend scenarios, using concrete objects (pencils, markers, crayons, etc) to facilitate "sword fights," create "machines with powers" or even "rocket ships." For the most part,

Leonardo's text creation was done orally. He was extremely articulate in Spanish and preferred to share his stories, anecdotes, and opinions in his face-to-face interactions rather than on the pages of his journal. However, the data revealed that Leonardo was discovering the power of the page as a means of self-expression and as a tool for manipulating his social status and peer relationships.

Victor

Like Leonardo, Victor was a rambunctious child with a vivid imagination. Victor created both written and oral texts and depended heavily on talk to facilitate the creation of his texts. At times, Victor's gregarious nature prevented his peers from completing their own written compositions. During journal time, Victor frequently engaged in what Faith considered to be "off-task" behavior. That is, behavior that did not appear to be related to the writing process. Consequently, Victor often lost the privilege to sit at his assigned table with his peers. When this occurred, Victor had to sit by himself at the teacher's table. However, this did not stop him from trying to connect with his peers. The data showed that Victor used his written texts as a way to gain entry into the peer world, maintain his social relationships and like Leonardo, manipulate his social status.

Writing as a Social Tool

Leonardo and Victor's relationship was tumultuous. One minute they were best friends and the next they were fighting with each other. At the beginning of the school year, Leonardo and Victor were assigned to the same table. In the following example, Victor and Leonardo were at the writing center with Jasmin and Javier. As they prepared to write, they engaged in an amicable conversation about the movie, *Fantastic Four*.

Leonardo: Look! Four Fantastics!	

Victor:	Los Cuatro Fantásticos y Charlotte.	The Fantastic Four and Charlotte.
Leonardo:	El Hombre de Plástico y el Hombre de Fuego que vuela.	The Plastic Man and the Human Torch that fly.
Victor:	¿Vas a hacer esa?	You're going to make that one?
Leonardo:	Yo quiero hacer ese. El de anaranjado.	I want to make that one. The orange one.
Victor:	¿El de fuego?	The fire one?
Leonardo:	¡No ese! ¡El de color anaranjado!	No that one! The one that is orange!
Victor:	¿Es el más fuerte?	Is he the strongest?
Leonardo:	Si el que rompe todas las paredes.	Yes, the one that breaks all the walls.
Victor:	A ese. El que está abajo.	Oh that one. The one on the bottom.
Leonardo:	¿Ese?	That one?
Victor:	Mira. ¡Este! ¡Este Leonardo! ¡Leonardo! ¡Este!	Look. That one! That one Leonardo! Leonardo! That one!
Leonardo:	¡Sí!	Yes!
Javier:	Voy a hacer este.	I am going to make that one.
Victor:	¿Cual?	Which one?
Jasmin:	(to Leonardo) Tienes que hacer cosas con /t/ como /t-t/ *tree*. Pero no copies.	You have to make things with /t/ like /t-t/ *tree*. But don't copy.
Victor:	I'm that one that has a big hand and goes around and around and around with his big hand.	

	(Writing Center, 10/24)

In this particular interaction, Leonardo initiates a conversation with Victor that becomes a planning session for their writing. Through his questioning, Victor prompts Leonardo to select a superhero as the focus of his writing. Another peer enters the discussion and decides that he will also write about one of the *Fantastic Four*. However, their conversation is cut short when Jasmin attempts to enforce the teacher's expectations. She reminds Leonardo that they have to write about objects that begin with the letter T. Victor makes one last attempt to steer the conversation back to the *Fantastic Four* but is unsuccessful. The conversation shifts gears as the students begin the assigned writing task.

As time progressed, Faith decided that Leonardo and Victor prevented each other from completing classroom assignments and activities. Her observations led her to believe that the boys were more productive if they did not sit next to each other. Consequently, the boys were separated and assigned to different groups. However, physical distance did not deter the boys from interacting with each other. They frequently engaged in cross-talk. That is, they conversed with each other even though they were not sitting at the same table. When the boys engaged in these kinds of conversations, they paid very little attention to the language of the day. For the most part, they spoke to each other in Spanish. While Leonardo was a very fluent Spanish speaker, Victor was not. However, this did not stop him from interacting with Leonardo. On the whole, Victor initiated most conversations with Leonardo in Spanish, despite the language of the day.

Interestingly, the majority of interactions that resulted from the boys' cross-talk were conflictive. Yet they repeatedly sought each other out as they engaged in writing activities. For example, one November morning, I captured the boys engaging in cross-talk during journal time. To his group members, Victor announces that he is going to draw a bird. Leonardo overhears Victor and responds to his comment. He says:

Leonardo:	Pues yo hice un camello y una nube.	Well I made a camel and a cloud.
He turns around and begins to write Victor's name underneath the cloud he drew. Leonardo's peers assist him in writing Victor's name on his journal entry.		
Leonardo:	¡Ay, ay ay! (gets up and goes to Victor's table) Mira Victor. Eres una nube.	Ay, ay, ay! Look Victor. You are a cloud.
Victor:	Hey! Tú no sabes escribir mi nombre.	Hey! You don't know how to write my name.
^^^ Leonardo walks over to Victor's table		
Leonardo:	Miren mi camello de los reyes de la navidad. Nunca haran un camello como yo. Nunca, nunca, nunca.	Look at my camel that belongs to the Three Kings of Christmas. Never will any of you make a camel like mine. Never, never, never.
Victor:	Está feito.	It's a little ugly.
Leonardo:	Vas a verlo.	You're gonna get it.
Leonardo goes and tells Faith about Victor's insult.		
Faith:	Victor. ¿Estás hablando con alguien que no está en tu grupo?	Victor. Are you talking to someone who is not in you group?
Victor:	A mí no me gustan los camellos.	I don't like camels.
Leonardo and Victor continue to cross-talk. Faith tells		

Leonardo to stop initiating conversations with students who are not at his table.	(Journal Time, 11/30/07)

Whereas the previous interaction between Leonardo and Victor was a collaborative endeavor, this exchange was clearly not. The interaction is initiated by Leonardo, who overhears Victor telling his peers about his writing plans. Leonardo tells Victor that he has drawn a camel and a cloud. Initially, Victor does not respond and Leonardo continues to work on his composition. A short while passes and Leonardo begins to write Victor's name underneath his cloud. With the assistance of his peers, Leonardo successfully writes Victor's name on his journal entry. He then gets up and goes to Victor's table in order to show him what he has accomplished.

It is unclear whether Leonardo chooses to incorporate Victor into his drawing as a display of solidarity or as a way to tease Victor. Nonetheless, it is obvious that Victor is not pleased by Leonardo's decision. Victor attempts to position Leonardo as an incompetent writer. Loudly he exclaims, "Hey! You don't know how to write my name." At this point in the exchange, Leonardo returns quietly to his table to work on his composition. He works on his composition for a brief moment and then decides once again to engage in cross-talk with Victor. This time, he does not leave his table. He stands up and holds up his journal as he says, "Look at my camel that belongs to the Three Kings of Christmas. Never will any of you make a camel like mine. Never. Never. Never." Again, Victor responds negatively to Leonardo's comment. He insults Leonardo's work by saying that it is "feito" (*a little ugly*). Leonardo does not ignore this insult. He goes and tells the teacher what Victor said about his composition. To resolve the matter, Faith reminds Victor that he should not be talking to a peer who is not part of

his assigned group. Victor tries to explain his insult to Faith, stating that he just doesn't like camels. Faith leaves and the boys continue to cross-talk until Faith tells Leonardo to stop initiating conversations with students who are not at his table.

About a week and a half later, Victor and Leonardo are once again assigned to the same table. As he begins to write, Leonardo announces that he is going to write about Victor.

Leonardo:	Yo hice un mono de nieve y tu eres el mono de nieve (points to Victor).	I made a snowman and you are the snowman.
Victor:	Tú eres un huevo de *weenies*.	You are an egg with *weenies*.
Leonardo:	Vas a verlo.	You're gonna get it.
Victor:	Pues tú me dijiste una llanta.	Well you told me I was a tire.
Leoarndo:	A que no. Yo te dije mono de nieve. Ahora yo te voy a disfrazar de un mono de nieve.	No I didn't. I told you snowman. Now I am going to disguise you like a snowman.
Victor:	Tú eres su novia.	You are his girlfriend.
Leonardo grabs Victor's green pencil color away from him.		
Victor:	¡NOOOOOO! ¡Vas a verlo!	NOOOO! You're gonna get it!
Leonardo:	I'm gonna color it.	
^^^ A few minutes pass by. Students are quietly working on their individual compositions. Victor tosses the pencil color he is using at Leonardo.		
Leonardo:	Vas a verlo.	You're gonna get it.
Victor:	Pues tú me jalaste el mío.	Well you pulled mine.
Leonardo:	Ahora yo te voy a reventar la cabeza.	Now I am going to make

Victor laughs. ^^^		your head explode.
Leonardo:	Yo voy a escribir Victor.	I am going to write Victor.
Vincent:	¡No sabes hacer mi nombre!	You don't know how to make my name!
Leonardo:	(sounding out) Vi-	
Alvaro:	Vic!	
Jasmin:	Vic-tor	
Victor:	Victor	
Alvaro:	V-i-c-tor	
Victor:	Mi nombre es asi. Una V y luego una I, C, T, O, R.	My name is like this. A [letter] V and then an I, C, T, O, R.
Leonardo:	¿Donde va la C? ¿Aquí o aquí o aquí o aquí?	Where does the C go? Here or here or here or here?
Victor:	Tú eres Vica.	You are Vica.
Leonardo:	¡Aquí va la C!	The C goes here! (Journal Time, 12/10/07)

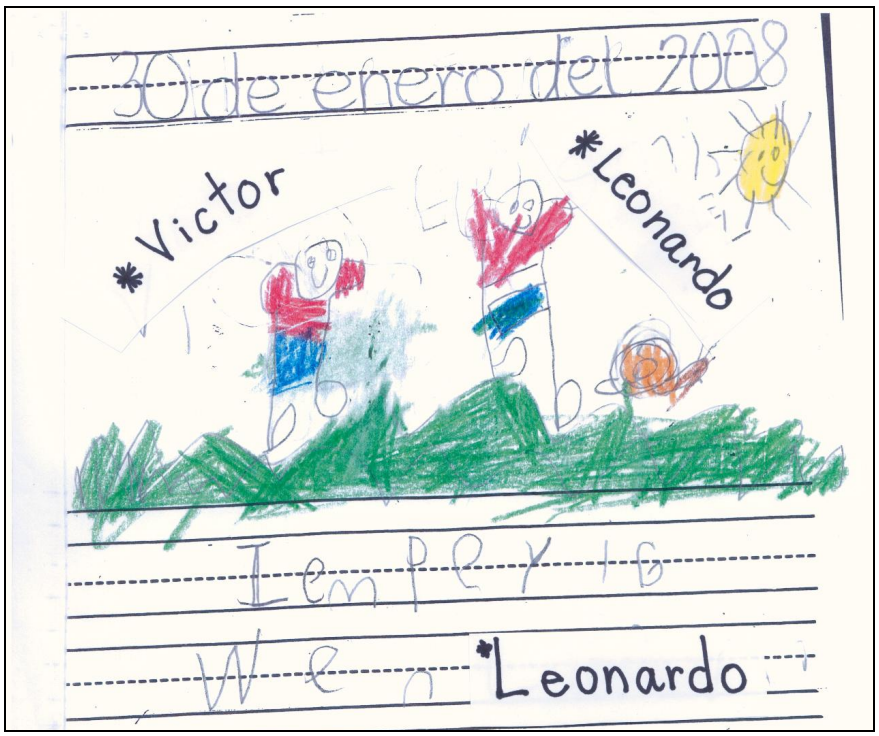
For whatever reason, Victor is clearly upset that Leonardo has chosen to depict him as a snowman in his journal. He responds by telling Leonardo that he is a "huevo de weenies." Leonardo is offended by the insult and threatens Victor by saying, "You're gonna get it." Victor tries to justify his insult to Leonardo by suggesting that Leonardo threw out the first punch. The boys continue to bicker amongst each other. Leonardo grabs a writing utencil away from Victor who retaliates by throwing a pencil color at

Leonardo. As the interaction continues, Leonardo announces that he is going to write Victor's name in his journal. Victor once again positions Leonardo as an incompetent writer, saying, "You don't know how to write my name." However, Victor's positioning does not deter Leonardo from attempting to write his friend's name in his journal. Leonardo rejects being positioned as incompetent and begins to sound out Victor's name. As he writes, he receives unsolicited assistance from Jasmin and Alvaro. Victor, who was initially upset about Leonardo's decision to depict him as a snowman, has a change of heart. He offers Leonardo assistance that is readily accepted by his friend. What started as an unproductive encounter between the boys resulted in a fruitful interaction that facilitated a carefully constructed journal entry by Leonardo. By the end of journal time on this particular day, Leonardo had written the following on his journal: "Victor es un mono de nieve" (*Victor is a snowman).*

According to Dyson (1993), children who participate in the "culturally complex social arena of the classroom" learn how the act of writing could accomplish "valuable social ends" (p. 106). As the school year continued, both Leonardo and Victor established an interactional pattern in which they repeatedly used their writing as a social tool. This particular pattern can be seen in the following vignette:

During journal time on one particular morning, Victor is sitting by himself at the teacher's table working diligently on his composition. Victor has drawn a picture of two smiling boys and a snail (see the journal entry below) and is eager to show it to his friend. Victor calls out to Leonardo and holds up his journal entry so that his peer can see what he has written. Angrily, Leonardo says, "!Ya no vayas a hacer algo como yo!

¡Es todo lo que quieres hacer! ¡Yo te voy a hacer en la cárcel!"[8] *In an attempt to show Leonardo that he has not written anything unflattering, Victor gets up and walks over to his friend's table. Victor taps Leonardo on the shoulder and shows him his journal. Leonardo frowns and then gets his peer's journal and begins to erase something. He then gets a pencil and begins to write over what Victor his written. In a matter-of-fact tone Leonardo says, "Asi es mi nombre."*[9] (Journal Time, 1/30/08)



"I em (am) peying (playing) wen (with) Leonardo."

Figure 5. Victor writes about Leonardo

In this interaction, Leonardo responds preemptively to Victor's journal entry. Because Leonardo and Victor have established a pattern of using their texts to tease each other, it could be argued that Leonardo assumed that Victor's text was going to be

[8]Translation: "You better not make something like me. That's all you want to do! I am going to draw you in jail!"
[9] Translation: "My name is like this."

unfavorable and reacted accordingly. Leonardo tells his peer to stop "doing things like him" and then threatens to draw Victor in jail. Victor realizes that his peer has misinterpreted his composition and attempts to resolve the issue. He goes over to Leonardo's table and shows him his journal. Leonardo looks at his peer's composition and realizes that Victor has spelled his name incorrectly. In previous encounters, Victor positioned Leonardo as being incompetent by suggesting that Leonardo could not write his name correctly. This pattern may have influenced Leonardo's decision to correct Victor's written work. By doing so, Leonardo was displaying his capabilities as a writer and countering Victor's previous attempts to position him as an inept writer.

In the next example, Victor again utilizes his journal entry to enter the peer world and engage with Leonardo. Victor is sitting by himself at the teacher's table because he has lost the privilege to work alongside his peers. Faith steps out of the classroom for a moment and Victor takes this opportunity to go over to Leonardo's table. He holds up his journal and says:

Victor:	Mira Leonardo es tu. Es tu. Escribí – Leonardo está encuerado. *Look Leonardo it's you. It's you. I wrote, "Leonardo is naked."*

Leonardo furrows his brow and shakes his head. He is visibly upset. Victor returns to the teacher's table. I decide to ask Leonardo about why he is angry with Victor.

Me:	¿Porque estas enojado? *Why are you mad?*
Leonardo:	Porque Victor escribió que estoy encuerado. El cree que soy un animal salvaje pero no lo soy. *Because Victor wrote that I am naked. He thinks that I am a wild animal but I am not.*

Faith comes back to the classroom and Victor quickly erases what he has written and changes his illustration. He shows Faith his journal and says:

Victor: Leonardo es bonito.
Leonardo is pretty.
(Field note, 1/31/08)
The figure below is Victor's final written product.

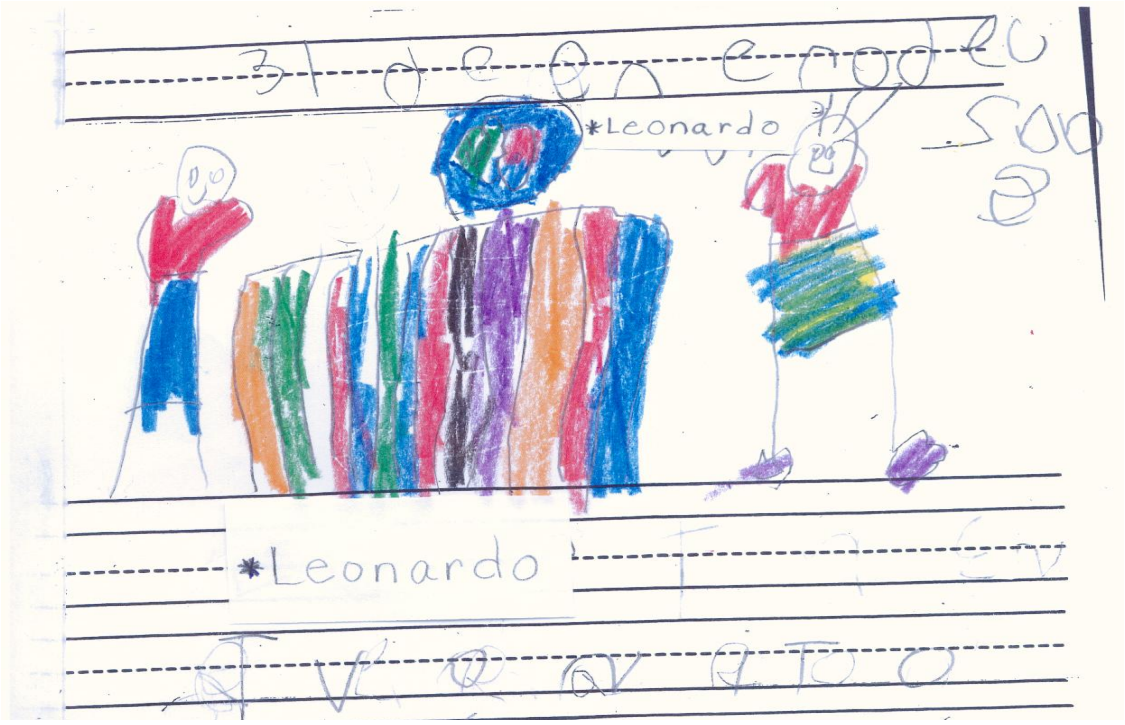


Figure 6. Victor teases Leonardo with his written text

Victor makes several decisions about his text that will facilitate entry into the peer world that he has been isolated from. First, he casts Leonardo as the starring role in his text. Because of the boys' prior history, perhaps Victor anticipates that Leonardo would respond to his text just like he responded to Leonardo's texts in the past. Second, Victor decides to poke fun at his peer by choosing to write "Leonardo is naked" in his journal entry. By writing something that might upset his peer, it appears that Victor was once again trying to ensure that Leonardo would react and perhaps reply to his work. Finally, Victor, an English dominant student, chooses to both speak and write in Spanish, despite the fact that the LOD is English. The case could be made that Victor's decision

to use Spanish was based on the boys' past interactions with each other. Prior to this particular incident, most of the boys' conversations were in Spanish. By continuing this pattern, Victor could be assured that Leonardo, who was Spanish dominant, understood what Victor had written and could respond accordingly.

Surprisingly, Leonardo did not take immediate action against his peer. He did not retaliate with a verbal insult or tell the teacher about his friend's written text. Instead, he decides to wait until he has the opportunity to counter Victor's text with a text of his own. During center time later that afternoon, Leonardo announces that he is going to write about Victor. In Spanish he says:

Leonardo:	…Voy a hacer mi libro. El libro se trata de, de Victor. ¡Oye Victor! Victor, voy a hacer un libro de ti…Un niño llamado Victor que siempre escribe las historias de otros niños. *…I'm going to make my book. The book is about Victor. Hey Victor! Victor, I'm going to make a book about you…A boy named Victor that always writes stories about other children.*
Victor does not respond to Leonardo's comment.	
Leonardo:	Es una alma ponderosa. Mira, mira (taps on page). Hice una alma poderosa para matar a Victor (giggles) porque él quería pelear…Yo gane, yo gane. <u>*I already finish my story.*</u> *This is a powerful soul. Look, look (taps on page). I made a powerful soul to kill Victor (giggles) because he wanted to fight…I won, I won. I already finish my story.*
Me:	¿De qué se trata tu cuento? *What is your story about?*
Leonardo:	De Victor y yo pero él quería pelear pero él tenía una cuerda entonces yo toque esa cosa y atrás están los libros. Este es de Victor y ese es el mío. *About Victor and I but he wanted to fight but he had a rope and then I touched that thing and back here are the books. This one is Victor's and that one is mine.*
(Writing Center, 1/31/08)	

Through his previous interactions with Victor, Leonardo has learned to manipulate written language in order to achieve his social goals. In this case, Leonardo decides to write a narrative to retaliate. Leonardo informs Victor about his intentions, saying that he is going to "make a book about you…A boy named Victor that always writes stories about other children." Victor, who is working at another literacy center, looks over at Leonardo but does not respond to his comment. Leonardo is not deterred by Victor's lack of interest. Leonardo begins to draw his story on his paper while explaining that he has made a "powerful soul to kill Victor because he wanted to fight." When he is finished, I asked Leonardo to tell me about his story, which he has composed on both sides of his page. Figure 7 below is Leonardo's drawn composition about fighting against Victor and winning. Figure 8 is a continuation of Leonardo's text. Leonardo explains that "back here are the books. This one is Victor's and that one is mine."

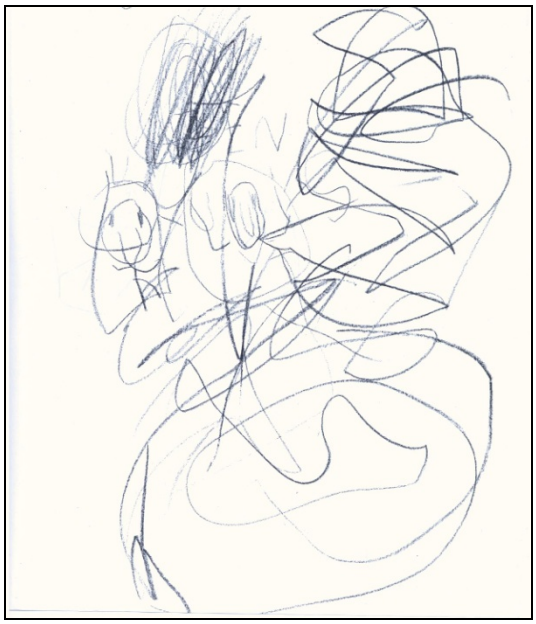


Figure 7. Front View of Leonardo's Story

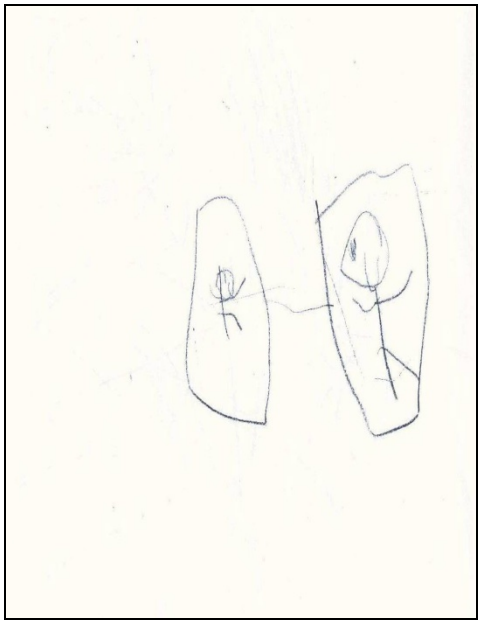


Figure 8. Back view of Leonardo's Story

As articulated by Dyson (1993), through the social work that occurs as children explore written language with their peers, they begin to understand "the possible relationships to other and to reality that can be enacted through manipulating the elements (and thereby the words) of written language" (p. 106). At first glance, it might appear that the boys' cross-talk was disruptive or even unproductive. Frequently, the boys left their assigned seats and engaged in confrontational talk that did not seem to be directly related to the texts they were creating at that particular moment. However, the significance of their cross-talk became apparent after the boys' interactions were analyzed across an extended period of time. An in-depth analysis of the boys' interactions highlights two major points. First, the boys' made strategic choices about their oral language use that reflected their communicative competence as developing bilinguals. Despite their differing language backgrounds and language capabilities, Leonardo and Victor communicated effectively with each other. When the boys engaged in cross-talk, they paid little attention to the language of the day. Instead of restricting themselves to speaking in the target language, the boys' made deliberate choices about their language use. For instance, Victor almost always chose to speak in Spanish when he conversed with Leonardo, who was a fluent Spanish speaker. It appeared that he purposefully made this choice in order to connect with Leonardo and to assure himself that his peer would respond to his comments even if they were negative or bothersome. In this particular case, Victor's language use is influenced by the fact that he wants to interact with a Spanish dominant peer. This issue will be explored in greater detail in the next chapter that focuses exclusively on students' oral language practices during journal time and at the writing center.

The interactional pattern established by Leonardo and Victor also shows that children may take unconventional routes to peer scaffolding. When examined in isolation, some of Leonardo and Victor's interactions did not appear to be beneficial or conducive to the composing process. As shown in the data excerpts above, the boys were argumentative, hostile and at times, disrespectful to each other in many of their exchanges. However, when all of their interactions were examined over time, it was clear that their confrontational encounters created opportunities for literacy learning and peer support. In the midst of their heated exchanges, the boys occasionally assisted each other in ways that were "typical" for the students in this particular setting. For example, on different occasions, both boys helped each other spell their names. Victor scaffolded Leonardo when he attempted to write Victor's name on his composition and vice versa. Surprisingly, the boys' turbulent exchanges also facilitated literacy learning in a more complex way. Specifically, the boys' exchanges allowed them to learn about the multiple purposes of writing. While most of the children in Faith's classroom were becoming skilled at using their writing to convey information or to tell a story, Leonardo and Victor were discovering that that writing could also be used as a social tool. As the boys wrote in their journals and at the writing center, both Victor and Leonardo accomplished a variety of social goals through their written/drawn texts. These goals included: peer acceptance, teasing, assuming and assigning social positions, and retaliation.

The next case will illustrate a very different interactional pattern that also resulted in peer scaffolding and literacy learning. In this case, Alex and Lourdes used their daily conversations with each other as a writing tool that influenced the production of many of their written/drawn compositions. Following is a brief description of each child.

Alex and Lourdes: "Alex mira que esto is not boring!"

Alex

Alex was a soft-spoken child who was well-liked by all of his peers. He was both kind and considerate and rarely quarreled with his peers or engaged in disruptive behavior. Alex was a very skilled writer and often composed in silence as his peers talked noisily around him. Yet he was always willing to help his peers with their compositions. There were many occasions when Alex provided solicited assistance to his group members. He also unwittingly scaffolded his peers' writing through the thoughtful questions he asked or with the insightful comments and/or suggestions he provided in his face-to-face interactions.

Lourdes

Like Alex, Lourdes was a soft-spoken child. But as the school year progressed, Lourdes opened up and interacted more frequently with her peers. Lourdes was a skilled storyteller and enjoyed sharing her stories and anecdotes with peers once she had established a connection with them. Her stories were carefully crafted and demonstrated her creativity and humor. Quite frequently, her oral compositions supported her writing in English and provided her peers with writing material that was reflected in their individual texts.

Using Conversation as a Writing Tool

Lourdes was the only girl assigned to her table. Although she socialized with all of the boys in her group (Leonardo, Arthur and Alex), she was particularly drawn to Alex. Most of the interactions Lourdes initiated at the writing center and during journal time were with Alex. In order to meet her needs as a writer, Lourdes frequently solicited

Alex's attention. At times, Lourdes successfully engaged him in meaningful dialogue. However, there were instances when Lourdes' attempts failed. Consequently, Lourdes developed various tactics to gain her peer's attention. The table below demonstrates the various strategies that she employed to elicit a verbal response from Alex as they both engaged in the production of written texts.

Table 3. **Lourdes' Elicitation Strategies**

Date	**Lourdes' Utterances**	**Translation**	**Description of Strategy**
2/08/08	Alex mira. Una orejota. Orejota que oye todo.	*Look Alex. A big ear. An ear that hears everything.*	Lourdes makes a comment about her composition.
2/11/08	Alex. ¿Te acuerdas de esta monita?	*Do you remember the little woman Alex?*	Lourdes asks Alex a question.
2/11/08	Mira Alex lo que puse aquí. (Alex ignores Lourdes) Ya no voy a hacer tu amiga Alex.	*Look what I put here Alex. (Alex ignores Lourdes) I'm not going to be your friend any more Alex.*	Lourdes utters a command. When Alex does not respond, she employs another technique. She verbally threatens Alex.
2/11/08	Mira Alex. Ten tu borrador.	*Look Alex. Take your eraser.*	Lourdes tries to help Alex as he writes.
2/12/08	Alex. (Lourdes taps him on the shoulder) Alex mira. Alex mira que esto **is not boring! Look!**	*Alex. (Lourdes taps him on the shoulder) Look Alex. Look Alex because this is not boring! Look!*	Lourdes uses a nonverbal cue to get Alex's attention. She uses repetitive commands to elicit a response from Alex. When those strategies do not seem to work, Lourdes switches to English and commands him to look at her work.

Lourdes' use of comments, questions, commands and nonverbal cues afforded her the opportunity to initiate dialogue with Alex. By doing so, Lourdes assumed the role of initiator. Alex assumed a role that was critical to the ongoing dialogue between the two

studies. On many occasions, Alex was the sustainer. Alex did not attempt to initiate interactions with Lourdes as frequently and with as much fervor as Lourdes. Yet he was just as committed to engaging in meaningful conversation with Lourdes. While Lourdes initiated most interactions, Alex focused on sustaining the exchanges that occurred as they wrote alongside each other. Quite often, Alex asked a considerable amount of questions as he talked with Lourdes. Discourse analysis revealed that most of the verbal exchanges that took place between Lourdes and Leonardo were similar in style. That is, many of their conversations followed a set interactional pattern characterized by Alex asking questions and Lourdes responding to those questions and/or giving information about a particular subject. This interactional pattern can be seen in the next exchange.

Lourdes:	Mi papá está más grande porque está – ¡YJJJJ! ¡Le puse pelo de mujer!	My dad is bigger because he is – YJJJJ! I gave him woman hair!
Alex:	¿A quién?	Who?
Lourdes:	A mi papá.	My dad.
Alex:	Jajaja.	Ja Ja ja.
Lourdes:	Mi papá tiene de este pelo.	My dad has this kind of hair.
Alex smiles.		
Lourdes:	El pelo de mi papá siempre lo tiene así.	My dad always has his hair like this.
Alex:	¿Así?	Like that?
Lourdes:	Se parece una salchicha. Se parece camarón…	It looks like a sausage. It looks like shrimp…
Lourdes yawns.		
Lourdes:	Ay, tengo sueño.	Oh, I'm sleepy.

Alex:	Oops!	Oops!
Lourdes:	Es que mi papá está lejos.	It's because my dad is far.
Alex:	¿Tu papá anda lejos?	Your father is far?
Lourdes:	Sí.	Yes.
Alex:	¿De ti?	From you?
Lourdes:	Si porque es una alberca y como yo puse un árbol aquí…I want to draw a girl eating grass.	Yes because it's a pool and because I put a tree here…I want to draw a girl eating grass.
Alex:	Ewww!	Ewww!
Lourdes giggles.		(Journal Time, 2/6/08)

Lourdes' initiates this interaction and establishes the conversational topic by commenting on her drawing. Alex appears to be intrigued by her comment and responds to Lourdes. In this particular interaction, Alex speaks seven times. Four of his utterances are questions that relate directly to what Lourdes' is saying each time she speaks. While each of Alex's question serves a particular purpose when it is uttered, (e.g., to seek clarification, to recap) the overall function of his questions is to maintain the conversation with Lourdes. Why would Alex want to participate in what appears to be an unbalanced conversation? It could be argued that Alex is attempting to establish solidarity with Lourdes. By doing so, Alex virtually assures himself that these conversations will continue. Like Lourdes, Alex is trying to meet his needs as a writer. By establishing an interactional history with his peer, Alex can anticipate the kinds of interactions that are

likely to occur and steer future conversations in ways that will support his own writing. This can be seen in the following exchange that occurred two days later.

Alex:	Mi big sister cree que ando acá pero no. Ya me escondí acá.	My big sister thinks that I am over here but no. I already hid over here.
Lourdes laughs.		
Leonardo:	This is my toy helicopter.	
Lourdes:	Y mi hermana estaba jugando touch.	And my sister was playing touch.
Alex:	¡Ay! ¡Yo también!	Oh! Me too!
Lourdes:	No pero yo voy a dibujar que estamos jugando hide-and-seek. Yo estoy acá arriba y mi hermano acá. Caminando por acá. "Oh Lourdes."	No but I am going to draw that we are playing hide-and-seek. I am up here and my sister over here. Walking this way. "Oh Lourdes."
Alex:	Y se cayó.	And she fell.
Lourdes:	"Oh Lourdes."	"Oh Lourdes."
Alex:	¿Dijo eso?	She said that?
Lourdes:	"Oh Lourdes." Pero yo y mi mamá también. Y mi mamá 'taba aca. "Oh Lourdes."	"Oh Lourdes." But also my mom and I. And my mom was over here. "Oh Lourdes."
Alex:	¿Hasta ahí? (points on Lourdes' picture)	Over here?
Lourdes nods.		
Lourdes:	Y mi papá aca. "Oh Lourdes."	And my dad over here. "Oh Lourdes."
Lourdes continues to draw as she talks.		
Alex:	¿Y no te encontró?	And he didn't find you?

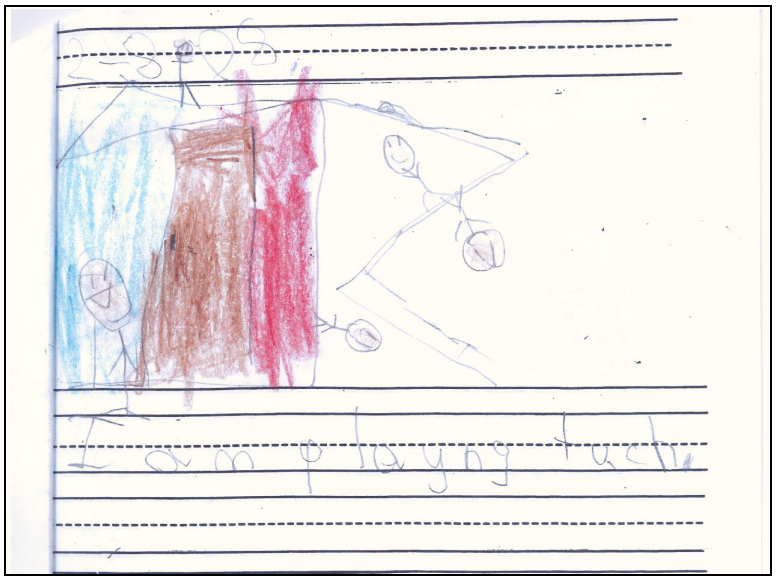
Lourdes:	Y mi mamá aquí.	And my mom here.
Alex:	¿Con eso te puede encontrar?	Can she find you with that?
Lourdes: ^^^	Si. Mi mamá ahí está y mi papá allá y mi hermano agarro una ladder (draws a ladder) y mi hermano se subió.	Yes. My mom is there and my dad over there and my brother grabbed a ladder and my brother climbed up it.
Lourdes:	Mejor mi mamá no estaba ahí. Estaba aca. Estaba caminando para aca. "Oh Lourdes."	I changed my mind. My mom was not there. She was here. She was walking this way. "Oh Lourdes."
Alex:	Aja. Como Clam. Clam se fue así. Mira. No. Yo siempre soy Clam.	Uh-huh. Like Clam. Clam walked like this. Look. No. I am always Clam.
Lourdes:	Mi mamá dice, "Oh Lourdes. ¿Donde estas? Te voy a dar un dulce." Y yo no estaba ahí.	My mom says, "Oh Lourdes. Where are you? I'm going to give you a candy." And I was not there.
Alex:	No. Mejor hide-and-seek. Yo también.	No. Hide-and-seek better. Me too.
Lourdes:	Mi mamá –	My mom –
Alex:	Pero diferente.	But different.
		(Journal Time, 2/8)

In his first utterance, Alex comments about what he has drawn in his journal. His peers respond to Alex by talking about their individual texts. Leonardo tells Alex that he has drawn a toy helicopter. Lourdes follows and says, "And my sister was playing touch." Alex appears to be excited about the fact that he and Lourdes have chosen to write about playing touch with family members. He says, "Oh! Me too!" Lourdes clarifies her writing plans in order to distinguish her work from Alex's. Lourdes responds by saying

the following in Spanish: “No but I am going to draw that we are playing hide-and-seek. I am up here and my sister over here. Walking this way…” Alex positions himself as co-author and adds to the text that is being created by his peer. He says, “And she fell.” Lourdes speaks next. By creating dialogue for her drawn characters, Lourdes brings her story to life for her audience (Alex). She says, “Oh Lourdes,” in a tone that suggests that her character is calling out to someone who is not in plain view. Alex responds by asking a question, which in turn prompts Lourdes to continue her storytelling. Alex continues to ask questions about Lourdes’ story when it is his turn to talk. These questions serve several purposes. First, Alex’s questions reassure Lourdes that he is interested in her composition. Alex’s interest keeps the conversation going and maintains the interactional pattern established thus far. By continuing to ask his peer questions, Alex continues to position himself as engaged audience member, which in turn positions Lourdes as the storyteller. Second, Alex’s questions directly scaffold Lourdes’ attempts to create a narrative. They give her the opportunity to flesh out her tale and to provide detailed information about the sequence of events in her story.

While this particular interaction appears to influence Lourdes’ composition, the exchange also shapes Alex’s writing as well. It seems that Lourdes’ story influenced Alex to change his mind about his writing topic. He now wants to produce a text about playing hide-and-seek. As the conversation begins to wind down Alex says, “No. Hide-and-seek better. Me too.” Lourdes attempts to speak next but is interrupted by Alex who says, “But different.” Like Lourdes at the beginning of the interaction, Alex wants to make sure that he is viewed as a competent writer who does not “copy” ideas. Alex clarifies that his text will also be about playing hide-and-seek but it will be different than

Lourdes' story. By the end of journal time on this particular day, Alex is able to finish both parts of his journal entry – the illustration and the text to accompany his picture (see Figure 9). Lourdes, on the other hand, does not finish her written composition (see Figure 10). Lourdes' illustration reflects her very detailed oral narrative but there is not written text to accompany her drawing.



"I am playng (playing) tuch (touch)."

Figure 9. Alex's story about playing touch

Figure 10. Lourdes' story about playing hide-and-seek

Two days later, Alex and Lourdes again engage in an extended conversation as they write in their journals. Lourdes initiates this portion of their exchange by saying:

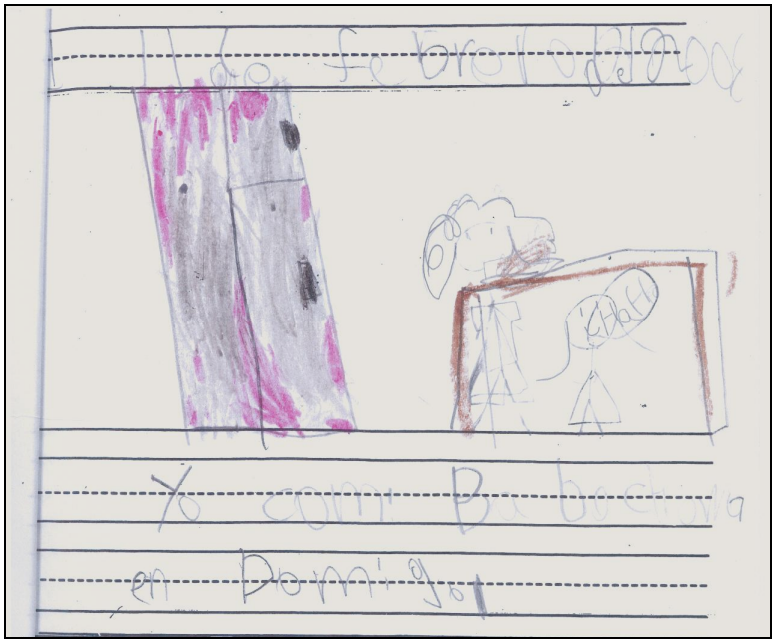
Lourdes:	Mira la televisión y el mueble aquí esta. (Lourdes pauses) Oh. Ya se. Me acorde La mesa aquí esta.	Look here is the television and the piece of furniture. Oh. I know. I remember. The table is here.
Alex:	¿Que es eso?	What is this?
Lourdes:	¡Órale! La luz está bien grande. Este es un refri.	Whoa! The light is very big. This is a fridge.
Alex:	¿Que estás haciendo?	What are you doing?
Lourdes:	Es mi cocina.	It's my kitchen.
Alex:	¿Que tenemos que hacer?	What do we have to do?
Lourdes:	Del fin del día (she meant fin de semana).	About the end of the day (she meant weekend)

Alex:	(pointing to Lourdes' drawing) ¿Que es?	What is that?
Lourdes:	Pues sábado y domingo.	Well Saturday and Sunday.
Alex:	Pues yo andaba jugando el Wii.	Well I was playing the Wii.
Lourdes:	Mi hermano estaba aquí. Estábamos jugando hide-and-seek.	My brother was here. We Were playing hide-and-seek.
^^^		
Lourdes:	Esta es mi *little brother*. *I mean mi little sister*. Es que estoy corriendo pero no me cacha.	This is my little brother. I mean my little sister. It's because I am running but she doesn't catch me.
^^^		
Alex:	Esta es mi *bed*.	This is my bed.
Lourdes:	A ver como huele este borrador.	Let's see how this eraser smells.
Alex:	Y este es el *bed* de mi hermana.	And this is my sister's bed.
Lourdes:	Mira Alex. Ten tu borrador.	Look Alex. Here is your eraser.
Alex:	Le voy a poner cosas aquí.	I am going to put things here.
Lourdes:	Yo tengo conejitos que tienen granitos.	I have bunnies that have a rash.
^^^		
Faith:	Cinco minutos niños para terminar el diario.	Five more minutes children to finish your journal.
Lourdes:	La barbacoa es de este color. Me falta no mas escribir. Voy a escribir, "Yo comí barbacoa."	Barbacoa is this color. I just need to write. I am going to write, "I ate barbacoa."
Alex:	Y yo voy a poner aquí abajo, "Yo jugué al Wii." No. Yo voy a poner, "Yo jugué al Wii esta semana." Necesito *pink* y *blue*.	And down here I am going to put, "I played with the Wii." No. I am going to

	put, “I played with the Wii this week. I need pink and blue. (Journal Time, 2/11/08)

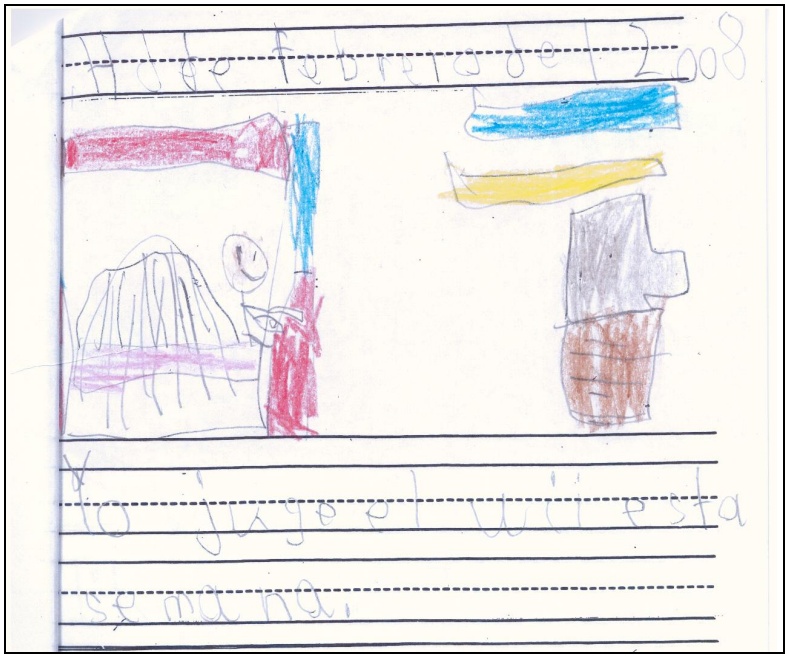
Lourdes uses one of her elicitation strategies in order to initiate an exchange with Alex. Her attempt is successful. Alex acknowledges her comment and responds with a question. Pointing to her picture he asks, “What is that?” Lourdes informs Alex that she has drawn a refrigerator and Alex replies with a follow-up question. He says, “What are you doing?” which Lourdes’ interprets as a request for specific information about her drawing. While Alex’s questions demonstrate his interest in Lourdes’ composition and his willingness to engage in a conversation with her, they also appear to be self-serving. It could be argued that Alex was asking questions to figure out his writing topic for his journal entry. His next question supports this notion. Matter-of-factly he asks Lourdes, “What do we have to do?” Unintentionally, Lourdes responds in a way that appears to confuse Alex even more. Instead of telling Alex that they have to write about their “*fin de semana”* (weekend), Lourdes says that they must write about the “*fin del día”* (end of the day). This erroneous information confuses Alex even more. He asks, “What is that?” and Lourdes responds, “Well Saturday and Sunday.” This answer appears to make sense to Alex. The two proceed to have a brief discussion revolving around their compositions. Alex talks about his weekend and Lourdes, who has already started composing, explains her drawing to Alex. He tells Lourdes that he played with the Wii all weekend. Lourdes, who has already started composing, explains her drawing to Alex. Suddenly, Faith interrupts the students and informs them that they have five minutes to finish up

there compositions. In response to Faith's news, both students articulate the written texts that will accompany their drawn compositions. Lourdes says, "The barbacoa is this color. I just need to write. I am going to write, 'I ate barbacoa.'" Alex follows by saying, "And down here I am going to put, 'I played with the Wii.' No. I am going to put. 'I played with the Wii this week.'" Figure 11 and Figure 12 below are there final written products.



"Yo comi Babacoa (barbacoa) en Domingo." (*I ate barbacoa on Sunday.)*

Figure 11. Lourdes writes about her weekend



"Yo juge (jugue) el wii esta semana." (*I played Wii this week*).

Figure 12. Alex writes about his weekend

The interactional pattern established by Lourdes and Alex was very different than that of Victor and Leonardo. Yet like the first case, Lourdes and Alex's face-to-face interactions created opportunities for peer support and literacy learning. Similar to the children in Dyson's work (1989; 1993), Lourdes and Alex engaged in amicable exchanges as they composed alongside their peers. These interactions demonstrate two points about the importance of children's talk during the composing process. In this particular case, Lourdes and Alex strategically assumed and assigned each other various social positions to meet their various needs as developing writers. Through the use of questions, commands and nonverbal gestures, Lourdes attempted to initiate exchanges with Alex while Alex assumed the role of sustainer. These positionings afforded the children opportunities to use their conversations as a writing tool. As suggested by Bodrova and Leong (1996), "Language is a primary mental tool because it facilitates the

acquisition of other tools and is used for many mental functions" (p. 19). Through their talk, the children were able to plan, clarify and elaborate their written compositions.

This case also demonstrates how both Lourdes and Alex were using their oral language in deliberate ways. Like Leonardo and Victor, Lourdes and Alex did not stick to the target language when they engaged in face-to-face interactions at the writing center and during journal time. Regardless of the language of the day, Lourdes almost always chose to speak to Alex in Spanish, the language she was most comfortable speaking. However, it should be noted that while Lourdes spoke in Spanish Alex, she continued to develop her literate capabilities in English. Lourdes frequently created written texts in English even though she chose to talk to her friends in Spanish. For instance, during one of her many conversations with Alex in Spanish, Lourdes created the following written composition:

"I am peyg (playing) tush (touch) and I win"

Figure 13. Lourdes' written composition in English

Similarly, Alex chose to speak in Spanish when he engaged in conversations with Lourdes. While Alex was fluent in both English and Spanish, he was aware of the fact that many of his peers were not and appeared to be sensitive to their needs as language learners. Thus, he almost always spoke in the language that his peers were most comfortable speaking. Furthermore, like Lourdes, Alex often displayed his biliterate capabilities by drawing on both English and Spanish as he composed. This particular finding will be detailed in the next chapter.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to illustrate the connections between student interactions and the written products that were created in the midst of children's talk. Instead of presenting general themes or categories that emerged from the analysis of all student interactions, two cases were presented. The cases focused on the interactions that occurred between two pairs of students – Leonardo/Victor and Lourdes/Alex - in order to shed light on the ways in which the evolving nature of their interactions clearly shaped their written texts in distinct ways. While both cases illustrated the complexities of student interactions, they differed in that they showed two very different paths to peer support. Ultimately, their routes to peer scaffolding influenced the final products that were created in unique ways.

Unlike monolingual students, the children in Faith's classroom weaved in and out of social worlds that were defined in part by the language and/or languages that were being spoken. In order to participate in these multiple worlds, the children assumed the role of linguist. They made purposeful choices about when they spoke English, Spanish and/or a hybridization of both languages. The four focal children presented in this

chapter varied in their oral language capabilities. Leonardo and Lourdes were Spanish dominant; Victor was English dominant, while Alex was a balanced bilingual. However, despite their differences they all found ways to engage in meaningful interactions with their peers by drawing from their linguistic resources. In the final findings chapter, the children's oral language takes center stage. Patterns in children's discourse will be detailed as well as how their language use facilitated their biliteracy development.

CHAPTER SIX: ORAL LANGUAGE USE OF YOUNG BILINGUAL WRITERS

This chapter reports on students' oral language practices during journal time and at the writing center. The chapter is divided into four sections. In order to understand the oral language use of the students' in Faith's classroom, it is important to re-visit the classroom context. Therefore, the first section extends the previous discussion on the classroom context by describing the language policy in Faith's classroom while the second section focuses on the ways in which students explored their oral language during writing activities. Section three describes the code-switching that occurred during student interactions. The last section in this chapter illustrates students' biliteracy development by revealing how students used both languages in the composing process.

The Language Policy in Faith's TWI Classroom: "The Freedom to Choose"

Lindholm-Leary (2001) suggests that effective features of instruction in a TWI classroom include providing both structured and unstructured opportunities for oral production and establishing a strong language policy in the classroom that encourages students to use the instructional language and discourages students from speaking the non-instructional language. TWI teachers play a key role in creating a sociolinguistic environment that opens up communicative spaces for all students and that facilitates the oral production of both languages for both groups of students. In a study of two-way immersion education in San Antonio, Texas, Perez (2003) found that TWI teachers attempted to strike a balance between "not pressuring" for oral production and encouraging students to take risks and demonstrate their oral language in the second language. Likewise, Faith struggled with the issue of promoting the oral production of students' second language while maintaining sensitivity to her students' needs as

language learners. The language policy she established reflected Ruiz's (1984) ideological notion of language as a resource. That is, Faith viewed students' home language as a valuable tool for the acquisition of their second language. She embraced students' use of their home language in the classroom and recognized the advantages of conserving and developing their linguistic repertoire.

Faith enacted her language policy in several different ways. To promote oral language production, Faith followed the guidelines of a 50-50 TWI program. Fifty percent of instruction was delivered in English and the other half was delivered in Spanish. During whole group instruction, Faith encouraged students to use the instructional language and discouraged students from speaking the non-instructional language. Faith employed various strategies to facilitate the oral production of the target language. In my classroom observations, I noted that Faith used simplifying and questioning in her interactions with students. She also used grouping as a way to promote the use of students' second language Faith discussed her use of simplifying with me during one of our informal conversations. As articulated by Faith:

> I clarify, I simplify my words to make them, to help them make the connection between languages. So if they get stuck on a word, I try and help them. I use a simpler form of the language, simpler text or words that they might be able to connect and then maybe jog their memory and help them come up with a word or words that they know and can articulate…(Informal Conversation, 2/12/08)

Faith also used questioning in order to help students speak in the LOD. On some occasions, Faith posed questions in the LOD in order to recap what students said in the non-target language. By doing so, Faith provided students with the words or phrases in the target language, with hopes that the students would begin to appropriate the language. As suggested by Johnstone (2002), language learners begin by "mimicking words,

structures, purposes and ways of talking that belong to other people. As they use and re-use these borrowed building blocks, successful learners appropriate them, or make them their own" (p. 138).

Faith's use of questioning to facilitate oral language production can be seen in the next interaction. The entire class is sitting on the carpet as Faith introduces the journal topic for the day. The language of the day is Spanish.

Faith:	Siguen los diarios. Vamos a escribir acerca de nuestro cuento favorito. Van a escribir sobre el cuento que les guste más. Javier. ¿Nos dices cuál es tu cuento favorito?	Journals are next. We are going to write about our favorite story. You are going to write about the story that you like best. Javier. Will you tell us what your favorite story is?
Javier:	**My favorite story is about Max. That we read about in Spanish. About the ABC's.**	
Faith:	A ver. ¿Tu cuento favorito es el de Max? El que leímos en español. ¿Nos puedes decir en español?	Let's see. Your favorite story is the one about Max? The one we read in Spanish. Can you tell us in Spanish?
Javier:	El cuento de Max.	The story about Max.
Faith:	Muy bien Javier. Ahora Alex. ¿Nos das una idea? ¿Cuál es tu cuento favorito?	Very good Javier. Now Alex. Will you give us an idea? Which is your favorite story? (Fieldnote, 9/20/07)

It is evident that Javier understands Faith's question in Spanish, because he responds to it correctly by telling the class about his favorite story. However, Javier answers the question in English. Faith acknowledges Javier's response in Spanish and reformulates his response in English in the form of a question. Faith follows up her first question with

a second, in which she asks Javier if he can repeat the information in Spanish. Javier complies and says, "El cuento de Max." In the next scenario, the LOD is English and students are once again sitting at the carpet while Faith introduces the journal writing topic. In English, Faith informs the class that they have to write about their plans for the weekend. She then solicits students to share their writing plans with the class.

Faith:	What would you like to do tomorrow?
Juan:	Go to school.
Faith:	You would? Even on Saturday?
Javier:	Not me!
Faith:	Let's have a girl share.
Jasmin:	**Mi mamá me va llevar a Mr. Gatti's.**
Faith:	What are you going to eat?
Jasmin:	Pizza.

Two students are asked to share their writing plans. Juan, an English-dominant student, responds to Faith's question in English while Jasmin, a Spanish-dominant child, decides to share in Spanish. Jasmin informs the class that her mother is going to take her to Mr. Gatti's Pizza. As in the previous example, Faith acknowledges the Spanish-dominant child's response. However, in this case, Faith does not recap Jasmin's answer in order to provide her with words which she can borrow or mimic. Faith asks Jasmin a question about the information that she shared in Spanish. By doing so, Faith builds on Jasmin's first response and gives the student another chance to successfully articulate an answer in English.

Grouping was another strategy that Faith employed to promote oral language production. Faith set up her classroom so that students sat in groups around large circular tables throughout most of the school day. Students were strategically assigned to their respective group. Faith made sure that each group consisted of students with varying language capabilities. So in each group there were English-dominant students, Spanish dominant students, and in some groups there were students who were balanced in their language use. As students worked on assignments and activities at their tables, they had unstructured opportunities to listen to fluent speakers of both languages. They also had the chance to practice speaking in both languages in an unthreatening way – through their routine conversations and interactions with peers. As suggested by Faith, grouping "helps a lot with them acquiring and also using their second language because they are put in a situation where they have to communicate with each other."

Faith encouraged students to speak in the language of the day during whole group instruction and as they engaged in group work. However, she felt that students needed the chance to draw on their home language as they communicated with peers, as well as to have stress-free opportunities to express themselves without having to worry about the LOD or the separation of languages. Faith felt that a strict enforcement of the LOD could create anxiety among her young students and she did not want them to feel "ostracized or scared to talk." As indicated by Faith:

> My focus as a teacher is to create an environment that helps students feel confident about themselves and to develop both of their languages to their fullest potential. I know there are certain ways of doing this, especially in dual language classrooms, but I don't think making my students stick to the LOD all day long is the right way. I think there would be a lot less talking going on. Students would not have as many opportunities to hear the language they are trying to acquire and

> those students who are not as confident in their oral language skills would maybe stay quiet. (Informal Conversation, 2/12/08)

Consequently, Faith created exploratory spaces in her classroom where students were free to express themselves using oral languages practices of their choice. Journal time and writing center time were two curricular spaces where the LOD was not enforced and students could explore their oral language capabilities in English, Spanish or a combination of both. In Faith's words:

> We have a 50-50 program. We state that, I model that but when the children work in small groups they tend to communicate in the language they feel more comfortable speaking. Sometimes, students use both languages and switch back and forth and that's okay too. I allow that because I want them to have a choice and I want them to value both [languages]. If I say, "only English" then maybe students will feel like I only value English and I wouldn't want either language to be diminished. I want them to acquire both equally. The opportunity for them to express themselves freely whatever the language of the day is a chance for them to feel good about themselves and the way they communicate….(Informal Conversation, 2/12/08)

As suggested by Perez (2003), the sociolinguistic environment in a two-way immersion classroom is crucial because it plays an important role in both the language and literacy learning of bilingual children. The purpose of this chapter is to report on the oral language use of young bilingual children as they engaged in writing activities in their classroom. The next section will highlight students' purposeful decisions about their oral language use in their face-to-face interactions with peers and the ways in which their decisions reflected the sociolinguistic context established by Faith.

The Exploration of Children's Bilingualism

Faith continually mentioned the importance of creating spaces in the curriculum where students could explore their linguistic skills. In one of our many informal conversations Faith said the following:

> Because if you're told, "Don't speak unless it's English" the child may just freeze and stay quiet and not connect with the language. So during certain times in the day I give them the freedom of expression and the choice to use their own language, their first language, to help them acquire the second language.

Because Faith established these spaces within the curriculum, the oral language used during face-to-face interactions at the writing center and during journal time was purposeful, meaningful and representative of students' communicative competence. During small group writing activities, all students, regardless of their language background, explored their oral language capabilities without being restricted by artificial boundaries normally established in TWI classrooms. As suggested by Grosjean (1989), bilinguals have developed competencies "to the extent required by his or her needs and those of the environment. The bilingual uses the two languages—separately or together—for different purposes, in different domains of life, with different people" (p. 6). In Faith's classroom, the children used both of their languages in their daily interactions at the writing center and during journal time. Students' oral language use reflected the following three factors: comfort level, peer group and the outside context.

Students' Oral Language Use Reflected their Comfort Level

According to Faith, "I encourage them to speak, read and write in the language of the day but I can't force them. Usually at the beginning they do these things in the language they feel most comfortable speaking" (Field note, 9/17/07). The data confirmed Faith's observation that her students regularly communicated with each other in the language they were most comfortable speaking. It was common for Spanish-dominant and English-dominant students to ignore the LOD and to speak in the language they were most fluent. In the next interaction, Arthur, an English-dominant student chooses to

speak in English when the LOD is Spanish. His utterances have been bolded for ease of reading.

Cosme:	Esta es Patricia. Esta es Patricia. Ira. (*This is Patricia. This is Patricia. Look*)
Arthur:	**Where is my pencil? Hey! Give me my pencil back!**
Cosme:	It's mine.
Arthur:	**He took away my pencil.**
Cosme:	Here's one.
Arthur:	**It's not sharpened!**
Cosme:	Here's one.
Arthur:	**I don't want that one. Cuz this one doesn't have an eraser.**
	(Journal Time, 12/12/07)

Arthur chooses to speak in English despite the fact that the LOD is Spanish and even though his peer is speaking to him in Spanish. He asks Cosme about his pencil in English, which causes Comse to switch languages and respond to Arthur in English. In the next interaction, the LOD is English and Lourdes, a Spanish-dominant student, speaks to her peers in Spanish.

Lourdes:	**One time the big mamma, a little girl –**
Arthur:	When she danced she fell.
Alex:	I know.
Arthur:	When my mom danced she fell.
Lourdes:	**Y luego que Big Mamma, que había bastante agua y que luego se avienta y luego que estaba una niña y la niña dice - ¡AYYYYYY! - Y luego que cae arriba y avienta toda el agua.**

(*And then that Big Mamma, that there was lots of water and then she throws herself and then that there was a girl and the girl says, "AYYYYY!" and then that she fell on top and all the water spills out.)*

Arthur: THEN MY BABY, THEN MY BABY, SWAM!

Lourdes: **Y luego la niña –**
(*And then the girl)*

Arthur: THEN MY BROTHER AND THEN MY MOM.

Lourdes: **Y luego que mi mamá va a mi cuarto y que va y me tira en el agua.**
(And then that my mom goes to my room and then goes and throws me in the water)
Arthur laughs.

At the beginning of the interaction, Lourdes attempts to articulate her utterance in English. She mentions Big Mamma and a girl but is not able to finish her thoughts because she is interrupted by Arthur. During her next turn at talk, Lourdes switches to Spanish and tells both Alex and Arthur about a scene from the movie *Norbit.* Arthur speaks next and continues to talk in English. Both students continue this pattern (Lourdes speaking Spanish and Arthur speaking English) of language use until the end of their interaction.

As the students in Faith's classroom worked on their individual compositions, they regularly spoke in the language that they felt most comfortable speaking. However, it should not be assumed that students rarely chose to speak in their "less developed" language. Even though Faith did not discourage students from speaking the non-instructional language of the day during journal time and at the writing center, both the English dominant students and the Spanish dominant students chose to speak in their

second language as well. The next section will highlight interactions where students' oral language use reflected their peer group and their desire to engage in meaningful conversations with peers regardless of their fluency in a particular language (or lack of).

Students' Oral Language Use Reflected Their Peer Group

While at times, students elected to speak in their home language, they did step out of their comfort zone and used their second language to communicate with peers. Often, English-dominant students chose to speak in Spanish regardless of the LOD and Spanish-dominant students chose to speak in English even though the LOD was Spanish. Faith noted the peer influence on students' language use when they were in their literacy centers. She said:

> Of course, listening to the students at their centers I think they are speaking in the language that they are comfortable with but it also depends on the students that they are with. If it's a LEP student and they are grouped with non LEPs they are trying to speak the English with the non LEPs and visa versa. If it's a non LEP grouped with LEP students then when they communicate with them they just want to make sure they are understood and so they speak the Spanish. (Interview, 2/6/08)

The next section reports on instances where Spanish dominant students displayed their oral language skills in their second language.

a. Spanish Dominant Students Choosing to Speak English

As Spanish dominant students worked on their written compositions, they frequently chose to speak English even when the LOD was Spanish. A careful analysis of the data showed that most often, these students elected to speak in English when they wanted to converse with their English dominant peers. Consider the following interaction. Jasmin, Javier, Lourdes are working at their assigned tables. The LOD is Spanish and students are copying the date from the chalkboard. Javier, an English-

dominant student, begins to fill out the weather graph found in their journal. He speaks first.

Javier: I think it's sunny.

Lourdes: I think it's sunny.

Leonardo: I think it's –

Jasmin: I think –

Leonardo: I think it's windy.

Lourdes: Windy?

Jasmin: I think it's foggy.

Leonardo: What means windy?

Javier: Cold!

Leonardo: Mi juguete favorito es el hombre araña.

Javier: Mi favorito caricatura es *Spiderman.*

(Journal Time, 11/2/07)

Javier decides to voice his opinion about the weather. In his utterance, Javier uses the phrase "I think" to introduce his thoughts to the other group members. Inadvertently, Javier's words become "borrowed building blocks" for his Spanish-dominant peers as they begin to articulate their own opinions about the weather in English. Lourdes, a Spanish dominant child, agrees with Javier's description and uses Javier's exact words to verbalize her thoughts about the weather. Leonardo, another Spanish dominant student, enters the conversation and in English verbalizes his description of the weather. He also uses the phrase, "I think," to tell the other children about the weather, but is unable to finish his utterance because he is interrupted by Jasmin. In English, Jasmin attempts to

describe the weather but is interrupted by Leonardo, who says, "I think it's windy." It appears that Lourdes does not agree with Leonardo's statement and questions his comment. Jasmin speaks next and tells her peers that she thinks it is foggy. Like the rest of her Spanish-dominant peers, Jasmin uses the borrowed phrase, "I think" in her utterance. Leonardo's next utterance suggests that he does not know the meaning of the word that he used to describe the weather. Perhaps Lourdes' question made him re-think the word he chose to describe the weather. In English, he asks, "What means windy?" Javier responds to Leonardo's question and attempts to clarify the meaning of the word "windy." Loudly he says, "Cold!" Interestingly, Leonardo decides to change the topic of the ongoing conversation and in the process, he switches to Spanish. He informs his friends that his favorite toy is Spiderman. Javier responds to his friend's comment and chooses to speak in Spanish, even though the LOD is English. Javier's choice to speak Spanish reflects the influence that students may have on their peers' oral language use. The next section will examine other interactions where English-dominant students displayed their bilingual competencies and spoke in Spanish.

b. English Dominant Student Choosing to Speak Spanish

At times, English-dominant students chose to speak in Spanish in spite of the fact that the language of the day was English. Analysis of the data showed that this occurred when English-dominant students were interacting with students who were speaking in Spanish. In the following exchange, Lourdes and Leonardo, two Spanish-dominant students, are speaking in Spanish when Arthur decides to enter the conversation.

Lourdes:	¡No! ¡Esa soy yo!	No! That's me!
Leonardo:	Ponle ombligo. ¡Ponte un ombligo!	Put a bellybutton. Give

		yourself a bellybutton.
Lourdes:	Bueno. Ahí está mi ombligo. Tengo tres ombligos.	Okay. There is my bellybutton. I have three bellybuttons.
Leonardo pulls up his shirt and points to his belly button.		
Leonardo:	Tengo un ombligo que todavia no se me mete.	I have a bellybutton that hasn't gone in yet.
Lourdes:	(Laughing) ¡Todos tienen!	Everyone has one!
Arthur:	**¿Los calzones? ¿Tus calzones?**	**The underwear? Your underwear?** (Journal Time, 2/6/08)

Lourdes and Leonardo are talking about Lourdes' illustration while Arthur looks on. Lourdes has drawn herself and Leonardo tells Lourdes that she needs to add a bellybutton on her self-portrait. He then pulls up his shirt, points to his bellybutton and informs his peers that his bellybutton has not gone in yet. Lourdes responds by telling Leonardo that everyone has a bellybutton like his. Arthur enters the conversation and in Spanish, asks Lourdes about whether or not she has drawn underwear on her picture.

On another occasion, Arthur chooses to speak Spanish when the LOD is English. As in the previous example, Leonardo and Lourdes are speaking to each other in Spanish when Arthur enters the discussion and speaks in Spanish.

Leonardo:	Oye. Estoy dormido. Estoy dormido.	Listen. I'm asleep. I'm asleep.
^^^		
Lourdes:	¡Leonardo! ¡Despierta!	Leonardo! Wake up!
Arthur:	**Yo lo voy a despertar.**	**I'm going to wake him up.**
Leonardo:	Estaba dormido.	I was asleep.
Lourdes:	¿Dormido?	

Arthur: No. Yo sé como dormir. Arthur begins to pretend snore. Lourdes: Yo me duermo así como Arthur.	Asleep? **No. I know how to sleep.** Arthur begins to pretend snore. I sleep like Arthur. (Journal time, 1/29)

In this example, both of Arthur's turns at talk are in Spanish. It appears that he is choosing to speak Spanish because Lourdes and Leonardo are playing in Spanish. In their play frame, Leonardo pretends to be asleep and Lourdes attempts to wake him up. Arthur enters the conversation and announces that he is going to wake Leonardo up. He continues with the pretend play and in Spanish, announces that he is going to sleep.

The next exchange is a little different than the previous two interactions but continues to illustrate the fact that students' oral language use reflected their peer group. In the following exchange, Sergio, an English-dominant student, is speaking primarily in Spanish when the LOD is English. Interestingly, Sergio chooses to converse in Spanish with Juan, an English-dominant peer. Juan's response to Sergio's language use results in Sergio switching to English.

Sergio:	**Look. Tienes muchas. Tiene muchas. Look. ¡Ay! Mi mano. Mi mano se quebro.**	**Look. You have a lot. He has a lot. Ay! My hand. My hand broke.**
Juan:	Sergio don't talk *Español.*	Sergio don't talk *Spanish*.
Sergio:	**Se quebro.**	**It broke.**
Juan:	Stop it. Stop saying that.	Stop it. Stop saying that.
Sergio:	**Mi mano se quebro. OH! My *lentes*. My glasses, I mean my shades.**	**My hand broke. OH! My *glasses*. My glasses, I mean my shades.**

Juan:	OOO, those are glasses?	OOO, those are glasses?
Sergio:	**I'm gonna wear my shades.**	**I'm gonna wear my shades.** (Writing Center, 2/29)

Sergio's motives for speaking in Spanish are unclear. Nonetheless, he has chosen to speak in Spanish. Instead of embracing his friend's language choice, Juan rejects it and tells Sergio not to speak in Spanish. Sergio ignores Juan and continues to speak in Spanish however, Juan persists. He says, "Stop it. Stop saying that." Midway through his third utterance, Sergio stops speaking Spanish and switches to English. By the end of the interaction, Sergio is speaking entirely in English.

As suggested by Grosjean (1989), bilinguals develop a communicative competence that gives them the ability to use language in concrete situations in everyday life, making use of "one language, of the other language, or of the two together (in the form of mixed speech) depending on the situation, the topic, the interlocutor, etc." (p. 6). As illustrated in this section, students' oral language use was shaped in part by their social interactions. Both English dominant and Spanish dominant students used their second language orally when conversing with peers. Regularly, English dominant bilinguals chose to speak in Spanish when talking with Spanish dominant peers and Spanish dominant students also used English when communicating with their English dominant counterparts. The next and final portion of this section reports the ways in which students' oral language use reflected the outside context.

I. *Out-of-Classroom Influences on Oral Language Use*

Erickson (2004) warns researchers about examining oral discourse in face-to-face interactions as if they were "unconnected to ecologies in the wider world beyond the immediate space and time of a particular interactional encounter" (p. 175). As articulated by Erickson (2004), "The danger in that approach is that it portrays local discourse practices as if they were occurring in a universe without social gravity"(p. 175). While students' language use during face-to-face interactions was unique and crafted "for the specific situation of its use in the moment of its uttering," it was apparent that their talk was also influenced by societal factors or processes that occur "beyond the temporal and spatial horizon of the immediate occasion of the interaction" (Erickson, 2004, p. 197). For the most part, this dissertation focused students' language use as a local process within a unique sociolinguistic environment established by Faith. As a result, data collection was confined to Faith's classroom. Nonetheless, a careful examination of students' oral discourse along with my detailed conversations with Faith provided evidence to suggest that students' language use was shaped by global processes as well.

The Prestige of English

As mentioned in the previous section, Spanish dominant children frequently chose to speak in English as they conversed with their English dominant peers. However, there were also instances where Spanish dominant bilinguals attempted to use their oral English skills even though the LOD was Spanish and despite the fact they were interacting with other Spanish-dominant students. Consider the following vignette:

One February afternoon, Rodrigo (SD) and Patricia (SD) are sitting at the writing center. The language of the day is English, yet Patricia and Rodrigo are speaking to each other in the language they are most comfortable speaking – Spanish. The children

are having a heated exchange because Rodrigo laughed at Patricia after she hit herself against the table. Patricia tells Rodrigo that one day, she is going to laugh when the same thing happens to him and that he is not going to like it. Rodrigo giggles and says "A que no." Suddenly, the conversation shifts as Patricia begins to examine Rodrigo's composition. Patricia points to Rodrigo's picture and wrinkles her nose as if she has just smelled something unpleasant. She then informs Rodrigo that her book is bigger than his and that her drawing is much better than what he has "scribbled." Out of nowhere, Patricia switches to English and tells Rodrigo, "I'm going to do English words." Rodrigo shrugs his shoulders and responds, "¿Porque?" (Field note, 2/2)

Patricia made a conscious decision to critique her peer's work and to exalt her own. According to Patricia, her book is bigger, her drawing is better and her text will be better because she is going to do "English words." Her choice to speak in English appears to be deliberate. Because Rodrigo rarely attempts to speak English, Patricia's English use could be interpreted as another attempt to demonstrate that she is "better than" her peer.

While it was common for Spanish dominant students to speak in English with other Spanish dominant students, it was unusual for English dominant students to speak in Spanish with other English dominant students. According to Faith, SD students were choosing to speak in their second language as frequently as they did because they "valued the English language." Faith attributed students' use of English to factors outside of the classroom context. She stated:

> They think that [English] is the language to acquire…I think society in general influences the students. When they go home they are not always going to be watching the novela with mommy, they are going to be watching cartoons that are

> in English. And so lots of things influence the kids to develop English. It's not just what's in the classroom. It's what's at home, what's on TV, and even church. All these things can influence their desire to learn English or Spanish and their desire to speak it at school…(Informal Conversation, 2/12/08)

The data supported Faith's belief that Spanish dominant students' language use was shaped by the status of English in students' lives outside of school. Popular culture, for instance, seemed to play a driving force in these children's use of English. When talking about movies, cartoons or even music, Spanish dominant bilinguals attempted to incorporate as much English as they could into their utterances without considering the LOD. Because these students were not fluent in English, they often used their Spanish as the base language in their conversations but code switched to English as much as they could. This will be explored further in the following section on code switching.

Parental influence also appeared to play a role in students' oral use of English. In my observations I noted that Jasmin, a Spanish dominant student, was always choosing to compose in English despite the fact that she could write Spanish more conventionally. She also attempted to use her English frequently in her conversations with students. Faith corroborated my observations. When I asked Faith to describe Jasmin's language use she responding by saying the following:

> She is writing in English most of the time, including on Spanish days. Verbally, orally, she is stronger in Spanish. However, she chooses to speak in English a lot. She struggles through it but is always trying. She's just so interested in the [English] language. (Interview, 2/6/08).

I decided to ask Jasmin about her language use. I interviewed her briefly one afternoon when I noticed that she had turned in a writing assignment in English when the LOD was Spanish. Because the LOD was Spanish, I interviewed her in Spanish.

Ana: ¿Porque escribiste tu cuento en inglés cuando hoy es día de español?

(*Why did you write your story in English when today is Spanish day?)*

Jasmin: Porque me gusta escribir en inglés.
(Because I like to write in English.)

Ana: ¡Pero escribes muy bien en español!
(*But you write so well in Spanish!)*

Jasmin: Pero me gusta mucho escribir en inglés. Después allá en el centro donde escribimos, nos puedes grabar y yo voy a escribir en español. Pero cuando yo hago mis tareas escribo en inglés.
(*But I really like to write in English. Later over there in the center where we write, you can tape us and I am going to write in Spanish. But when I do my class work I write in English.)*

Ana: Y cuando hablas - ¿cual idioma prefieres usar?
(*And when you speak, what language do you prefer to use?)*

Jasmin: Inglés.
(*English.*)

Ana: ¿Porqué?
(Why?)

Jasmin: Porque mi mamá quiere que aprenda cómo hablar inglés.
(Because my mom wants me to learn how to speak English.)

(12/4/07)

Faith also mentioned the fact that Jasmin's mother was "pushing the English." In one of our interviews, Faith talked specifically about Jasmin's mother and the influence that she has on Jasmin's language use. As indicated by Faith:

> I think she is just very interested in wanting to capture the English language and also because of her mother. Her parents have influenced her to learn the English language. Her mother pushes her for the English even though she's dominant Spanish…I've had conversations with her where she asks, "How is she doing with the English?" (Interview, 2/6/08)

While the analysis of students' talk in this dissertation focused the "specific situation of its use in the moment of its uttering" it was clear that outside factors influenced students' oral language use (Erickson, 2004, p. 197). The data showed that at

times, Spanish dominant students chose to speak English as they engaged in the writing process even though the LOD was Spanish and despite the fact that they were interacting with other Spanish dominant students. The prestige of English in students' lives outside of school appeared to motivate Spanish dominant students to use English as frequently as they did in their face-to-face interactions during journal time and at the writing center.

Faith promoted student agency by creating spaces in the curriculum where students could make their own choices about the ways in which to use their oral language skills to communicate with peers. The data illustrated that students' oral language use at the writing center and during journal time was shaped by both local and global processes. At times, students' use of one particular language reflected their comfort level, while other times, students' language use was shaped in part by their social interactions with peers. Analysis of the data also highlighted the ways in which students oral discourse was connected to the world outside of the classroom.

This section focused on how the children in Faith's classroom used both English and Spanish in the midst of their face-to-face interactions. However, there were many occasions when students' utterances were not entirely in one language or the other. In fact, hybrid language use was a common occurrence in this particular TWI classroom. The next section will report on one particular hybrid language practice – code switching – and the communicative functions that it served.

Code Switching

As suggested by Gumperz (1973) code switching refers to the alternate use of two or more languages in the same utterance or conversation. While Faith did not promote the use of code switching, she did not discourage it. Throughout the duration of the

study, all of the students used code switching as a way to extend their communicative competence for achieving conversational goals (Reyes, 2001). Analysis of the data revealed that code switching served the following functions: filling in gaps, insistence, clarification, aligning with popular culture, and comedic relief. Each will be discussed further in the follow sections.

Filling in Gaps

As suggested by Reyes (2001) and Palmer (2004), children may code switch when they do not know the word in one language. During writing activities in Faith's class, there were many instances when English-dominant students attempted to speak Spanish and switched to English when they did not know a word. Here are some examples:

Victor (ED): Las arañas *attack*! (9/24)
Javier (ED): Yo hice una mariposa y una *bee.* (11/2)
Victor (ED): ¿Como se hacen los *bats*? Lourdes (SD): ¿Que son *bats*? Victor (ED): Los que vuelan. Yo vi una en el zoologico. ¿Tu también? (10/22)

While English dominant students drew on English words when speaking Spanish, Spanish dominant children seldom used their Spanish word knowledge when speaking English. There were only a couple of occasions where a Spanish dominant child or a child who was balanced in their language use drew on their Spanish when speaking English. Note the following instances of code switching.

Cosme (B):	I'm gonna color the fish. *Copiona*. (2/12)
Leonardo (SD):	Hey Alex. Look at what I made. A car. Watch. A car. I make a watch car. *Yo me hice a mi.*

Similarly, Palmer (2004) found that second grade Spanish dominant children in a two-way immersion classroom rarely drew on their Spanish vocabulary when speaking English. Palmer attributes this pattern to the higher status of English saying:

> While nearly all speakers of Spanish are also speakers of English in this setting, the opposite is not true: there are plenty of English speakers at this school who speak no Spanish. This phenomenon provides a powerful and concrete illustration of the higher status of English, in our society and in this classroom. English speakers feel they can use their language with confidence even in the presence of native Spanish speakers, while Spanish speakers do not use Spanish to fill the gaps in their knowledge of English, even when in a group made up of entirely Spanish speakers. (p. 135)

The prestige of English may have also promoted code switching among Spanish dominant and balanced bilinguals. It was very common for them to use Spanish as the base language and then switch to English. For example:

Lourdes (SD):	Axel mira que esto *is not boring! Look!* (2/12)
Cosme (B):	Le dijo a Rodrigo una *bad, bad word*. Una *bad word.* ¿Verdad? ¿Qué te dijo?

As fluent Spanish speakers, Lourdes and Cosme are perfectly capable of articulating their thoughts in Spanish, yet they both switch to English in the midst of their utterances. In both examples, it does not appear that Lourdes and Cosme code switch due to the topic of the ongoing conversation. Lourdes was trying to get her peer to acknowledge her written composition while Cosme was trying to condemn one of his peers who apparently said a "bad word." Nor does it seem that the children switched languages due to the addressee

of their message. In both cases, Lourdes and Cosme were speaking to other Spanish dominant children.

Insistence

Similar to other studies that examine code switching in school-age children (e.g., Palmer, 2004; Reyes, 2001) this dissertation study found that one of the functions of code switching to be insistence. There were many instances where children switched languages to convey persistence of a specific thought (Reyes, 2001). Consider the following examples:

Javier (ED):	This is me skateboarding. No. This is my dad. *Es mi papá*. (9/21)
Javier (ED):	¡NOOO! ¡Es mío! *This one is mine!* (12/10)
Victor (ED):	Hice una arañita. Javier, Javier, Javier. Look. *A little baby spider*.
Leonardo (SD):	Mi favorito *movie* es del Hombre Araña. Mi *favorite movie is Spiderman*. (11/2)
Alex (B):	I want to be in the sky. *En el cielo. En el cielo*. (9/25)

At first glance, it may appear that the students are code switching because they are not being understood by their peers. Yet this is not the case. The children are switching languages in the midst of their utterances in order to emphasize what they are saying. Javier, an English dominant student, uses this strategy when he is speaking in English or in Spanish. In the first example, Javier is explaining his composition to a peer. He begins to speak in English and says, "This is me skateboarding. No. This is my dad." He then switches to Spanish to restate the fact that he is drawing his dad. He says, "Es mi papá." In the second example, Javier is responding to a peer who is trying to take away his writing tool. In order to make his position clear, he begins to speak in Spanish

and then switches to English only to restate what he has just said in Spanish. The last three examples also illustrate instances where children used code switching as a communicative strategy to drive home a particular comment or idea. Like Javier, Victor attempts to explain his composition and decides to code switch to emphasize the fact that he has drawn a spider in his journal. Leonardo code switches in the same way to underscore the fact that his favorite move is Spiderman. Finally, Alex, who speaks both English and Spanish with relative equal proficiency code switches to highlight the fact that he "wants to be in the sky." He says it first in English and then repeats it in Spanish two times.

Clarification

There were a few instances where children code switched to provide more information or to explain an idea or word. In the next examples, two English dominant students attempt to explain words in Spanish. The words have been bolded for ease of identification.

Arthur (ED): **Borracho** means that you're sick. Cosme (B): **Borracho** means tu tomaste mucho. (10/15)
Javier (ED): **Recreo** means play outside!

Interestingly, two English dominant students attempt to explain two Spanish words to their peers. In the first example, Arthur switches to explain the meaning of the word "borracho," which means "drunk" in English. In the first example, Arthur switches to English, his dominant language to define the word "borracho." According to Arthur, "Borrahco means that you're sick." His Spanish dominant peer is not satisfied with this

definition and corrects Arthur. He responds in Spanish and tells his friend that "borracho" means "you drank too much." In the second example, Javier attempts to define the Spanish word "recreo," which is equivalent to the word "recess" in English. He too switches languages to explain the meaning of the word. Confidently, Javier says, "Recreo means play outside!"

Aligning with Popular Culture

Similar to Gort (2006), this study found that both Spanish dominant and English dominant children code switched in order to align with popular culture. When students discussed movies, music and cartoons, they often switched to English in the midst of their utterance. Consider the next two examples:

Lourdes (SD): Y luego que me da una manía y luego que me voy y luego que abro la ventana y digo, "*I believe I can fly*" y que me aviento! (2/6)
Javier (ED): Mira. Voy a hacer *Megatron*. *I'm going to do a book of Transformers*.

In the first utterance, Lourdes is in the midst of telling a story about a time when she opened up a window in her house and tried to fly. In this particular exchange, Lourdes tells her peers what she said right before she jumped out the window. Interestingly, Lourdes incorporates lyrics from the R&B song by R. Kelly (1996) by using them as dialogue. This prompts her to code switch. She sings, "I believe I can fly," and then immediately switches back to Spanish to finish narrating her story. In the second example, Javier, an English dominant student, initially speaks in Spanish because he is addressing a Spanish dominant student. However, because he is writing about the popular cartoon series, *Transformers*, he switches to English.

Comedic Relief

The playful use of language by second language learners has been well documented (e.g., Bell, 2005; Broner & Tarone, 2001; Cook, 1997; Pomerantz & Bell, 2007). However, most of these studies have focused on older learners. Another sociolinguistic function of code switching in this particular classroom setting was humor. This purposeful yet playful use of code switching occurred frequently as students attempted to negotiate their social status in the midst of the composing process. At times, the children used humor as a means to defend themselves or to avert an uncomfortable situation. However, the students also attempted to make their peers laugh as a display of solidarity. In the following example, Victor (ED) is conversing in English with Cosme (B) and Alex (B). As Victor speaks, he code switches, which causes his peers to burst out in laughter.

Cosme:	Alex look it. I'm gonna do Victor.	
Alex giggles. Cosmes whispers something to Alex.		
Alex:	¡No digas eso!	Don't say that!
Cosme giggles.		
Victor:	(singing) Old McDonald had a farm. E-I-E-I-O. With a ***pato*** here and a ***pato*** there –	Old McDonald had a farm. E-I-E-I-O. With a ***duck*** here and a ***duck*** there –
Laughter erupts at the table.		
Faith:	Victor!	Here is Victor. Look at what he did.
Alex:	(about Cosme's drawing) Aquí está Victor. Look at what he did.	
Victor:	(to Cosme) I'm not gonna be your friend.	

Cosme: Hey! Where's the marker? Victor: Where's the *salchicha*? Alex giggles. Alex: ¡Salchicha! Cosme: (to Alex) This is Victor. Victor: I'm *gordo* like a *globo*? I need a *salchicha*! The boys laugh.	Where's the *sausage*? Sausage! I'm *fat* like a *balloon*? I need a *sausage*! (Journal Time, 11/12/07)

In his first utterance, Victor code switches as he sings, "Old McDonald." He is singing in English, the language he is most fluent in, and yet he makes a decision to insert the Spanish word for duck as he sings. While Victor's motives for code switching are unclear, a possibility is that Victor is playing with language as a demonstration of his bilingual competencies. Interestingly, Victor's peers respond to the code switch. Both Cosme and Alex laugh loudly, causing Faith to redirect Victor's behavior. As the interaction continues, Alex informs Victor that Cosme has drawn an unflattering picture of Victor in his journal. The picture seems to upset Victor. In English, Victor tells Comse that he is no longer going to be his friend. Cosme ignores Victor and asks, "Hey! Where's the marker?" In a mocking tone, Victor asks, "Where's the salchicha?" It appears that this time, Victor purposefully switches to Spanish to provoke laughter from Alex. Victor succeeds because Alex giggles loudly. Cosme speaks next. It looks like he is trying to get Alex to respond to the unflattering picture he has drawn of Victor. Perhaps he too wants to make Alex laugh. However, to deflect Cosme's inadvertent insult, Victor attempts to use humor. He resorts to code switching once again.

Responding to the picture of himself Victor exclaims, "I'm like a globo? I need a salchicha!" This time, all three boys laugh.

In the next example, Juan, Sergio and Alex are at the writing center. Both Juan and Sergio are English dominant bilinguals who rarely attempt to use their Spanish orally. In the middle of their interaction, Juan hands Sergio a scented marker and says:

Juan: Look. Smell it.

Sergio: (smells marker) ¡*Puchi*!

Alex and Juan laugh.

Juan: (to Alex) *Puchi.* It smells like medicine. Look. Smell it.

Sergio gets another scented marker and smells it.

Sergio: Ewww *puchi*!

Alex and Sergio giggle.

Juan: Hey smell this one. Smell this one.

Sergio: Whose gonna smell it?

Juan: Ewww *puchi*!

Alex: (laughing) Stop saying that.

Sergio: I want to smell it. It smells *puchi*!

The boys giggle.

Sergio: What are you laughing about?

Juan: It's just *puchi.*

Sergio: ¡*PUCHI*!

Juan: Stop.

Sergio: *Puchi puchi*.

Alex giggles

^^^

Juan: Stop saying that.

Alex: It's funny.

Even though Juan, Sergio and Alex are conversing in English, Sergio chooses a word in Spanish to describe the way the marker smells. Sergio says, "puchi" which is equivalent to the word "yucky" English. Alex and Juan both laugh in response to Sergio's word choice. Juan speaks next and attempts to describe the scented marker by using the word "puchi" in his utterance as well. Code switching Juan says, "Puchi. It smells like medicine." Sergio gets another scented marker from the caddy and proceeds to smell it. Apparently, he does not like the way it smells because he says, "Ewww puchi!" This time, Alex and Sergio laugh. The boys continue exploring the scented markers. Juan smells another marker and describes it using the word "puchi." Alex tells Juan to stop saying the word because it is making him laugh too much. However, Sergio immediately uses the word in his next turn at talk. It appears that he wants to continue to make his peers laugh. Code switching he says, "I want to smell it. It smells puchi." The boys continue to play with the word "puchi." At the end of the interaction, Juan asks Sergio to stop saying "puchi" while Alex continues to laugh every time that his peers use the word. Smiling, Alex says, "It's funny."

While young monolingual children also play with language, they do not have the linguistic resources to engage in the kind of language play that some young bilinguals undertake as they interact with other bilingual peers. In this particular TWI classroom,

the children drew from their developing knowledge of English and Spanish in order to create utterances that provided comedic relief in the midst of their interactions. Both examples presented illustrate young bilinguals strategically code switching to get a laugh from their peers. Thus, code switching also functioned as a tool that was used to accomplish social goals. In the first example, Victor appeared to make his peers laugh through the use of code switching in order to deflect a peer's insult. In the second example, the boys' seemed to create humorous utterances by code switching to facilitate the establishment of solidarity among the peer group.

Like other studies that have examined the code switching of bilinguals, (Belz, 2002; Palmer, 2004; Reyes, 2001) this study illustrates that even young bilinguals use code switching in purposeful ways. Despite their language backgrounds, all of the children in Faith's classroom engaged in some sort of code switching. In this particular classroom, the children used code switching to fill in gaps, clarify their thoughts, to convey persistence of a specific thought, align with popular culture and to provide comedic relief. By code switching in the midst of their spontaneous interactions with peers, these young bilinguals displayed "a growing sense of linguistic competence, creativity, and power" (Belz, 2002, p. 21).

While the development of bilingual children's oral language is important, it is only part of the picture. Bilingual children's literate capabilities in both English and Spanish must be examined in conjunction with the development of their oral language. The next section will report on students' biliteracy development. Specifically, it will focus on the ways in which students used their entire linguistic repertoire as they explored written language with their peers.

Speaking in One Language but Writing in the Other

As the children in Faith's classroom developed their writing capabilities in two languages, they weaved through multiple worlds that consisted of talking, writing and playing (Dyson, 1989). As they navigated through these worlds, students chose to express themselves using English, Spanish and/or both languages simultaneously. Frequently, students who were Spanish-dominant used their Spanish orally in their interactions with peers but chose to write in English. In doing so they were using their more developed language to plan their compositions, develop the characters in their drawings and written texts and to co-construct texts. In the following example, Leonardo (SD) solicits assistance from Alex (B) as they write in their journals. The LOD is English and Leonardo initiates the conversation in Spanish by saying the following:

Leonardo:	Hazme una con un casco. No. Una abeja.	Make me one with a helmet. No. A bee.
Alex:	¿Una abeja con un casco?	A bee with a helmet?
Leonardo:	Sí.	Yes.
Alex:	¿Que camina?	That walks?
Leonardo:	No. Que nada mas vuela y que hace que las flores no se muevan.	No. That only flies and that doesn't make the flowers move.
Alex:	¿Primero las flores o la abeja?	First the flowers or the bee?
Leonardo grabs the pencil away from Alex.		
Leonardo:	Abeja. No, no. Yo hago las flores.	Bee. No, no. I will make the flowers.

Leonardo asks Alex to help him draw a bee with a helmet and Alex agrees. Alex responds in Spanish and asks Leonardo a couple of questions to gather information about the picture that he is going to draw. The boys continue to talk in Spanish as they both work on drawing Leonardo's bee. When the picture is completed, Leonardo prepares to write about what he has drawn. He stops for a moment and then decides to ask Alex for assistance. He switches to English as seen in the following excerpt.

Leonardo:	Can you help me write? Can you help me write?	
^^^		
Leonardo:	The bee. The bee is in the flowers.	
Alex begins to writes.		
Alex:	Bee.	
Leonardo:	Bee in the /f-la-wrs/. *Aquí va el puntito final*. I'm finished!	Bee in the /f-la-wrs/. *The period goes here*. I'm finished. (Journal Time, 12/11/07)

Interestingly, the minute that Leonardo decides to write he switches to English and asks Alex for assistance. In English, he also dictates what he wants to write underneath his picture. In actuality, Leonardo is telling Alex what he wants him to write. Leonardo watches Alex as he writes. As Alex writes, Leonardo reads over what he has written. In his last turn at talk, he switches to Spanish to tell Alex where to put a period and then switches back to English to inform his table that he is finished with his journal entry.

As mentioned in Chapter Five, Lourdes (SD) and Alex (B) frequently talked to one another in Spanish as they composed texts in English. In the next example, Lourdes

and Alex are at the writing center. Alex is half way through his book about the vowels, which he has written in English. In the middle of their composing, Lourdes initiates a conversation in Spanish with Alex, announcing that she is also going to create a text about the vowels. Lourdes makes sure to inform Alex that her composition is different than his because in her version, the vowels were lost. She says:

Lourdes:	Alex, yo voy a dibujar A, E, I, O, U pero estaban perdidos.	Alex, I am going to draw A, E, I, O, U but they were lost.
Alex:	Esta son la niñas. Las novias de A, E, I, O, U.	These are the girls. The girlfriends of A, E, I, O, U.
^^^		
Lourdes:	Yo voy a escribir que la O se perdió primero.	I am going to write that the O got lost.
Alex:	Y esta *little O* es una niña y anda todavía con el *newspaper*.	And this *little O* is a girl and she is still with the *newspaper*.
Lourdes:	Es *cheerleader.*	She is a *cheerleader.*
Alex:	Uh-huh. La U ya se fue.	Uh-huh. The U already left.
Lourdes:	¿Está volando?	Is it flying?
Alex:	Yo las voy a hacer así.	I am going to make them like that.
Lourdes:	¿Volando? La A se perdió y esta niña la está buscando porque la necesita.	Flying? The A got lost and this girl is looking for it because she needs it.
Alex:	(reading his title in English) *A, E, I, O, U*.	
^^^		
Lourdes:	Porque puse la *A* en lugar de poner *the alphabet.*	Because I put the *A* instead of putting *the alphabet*.

Lourdes reads Alex's title page.		
Lourdes:	*By* Alex Rodriguez. Ponte Rodriguez. Tu apellido. Y una vez le puse mi apellido. Yo ahorita le voy a poner mi apellido. Por eso no le pinte. Ahí le voy a poner el título abajo del *tree***.** Ahí le voy a poner "*I like the alphabet."*	By Alex Rodriguez. Put Rodriguez. Your last name. One time I put my last name. In a little bit I am going to put my last name. That's why I didn't color it. Right there I am going to put the title under the *tree*. Right there I am going to put "*I like the alphabet*." (Center Time, 2/8/08)

Although Lourdes and Alex engage in one-word code switches throughout their exchange, most of the conversation took place in Spanish. As fluent speakers of Spanish, the children are able to share their writing plans with each other and engage in meaningful dialogue that will serve as the basis of their written compositions. It is not until Lourdes talks about the title of her book that she switches to English. In Spanish, Lourdes tells Alex that she is going to write the title of her story underneath the tree she has drawn. Her last words are, "Ahí le voy a poner, "I like the alphabet." Lourdes' final product reflects her use of Spanish for planning and creating her illustration and English for writing.

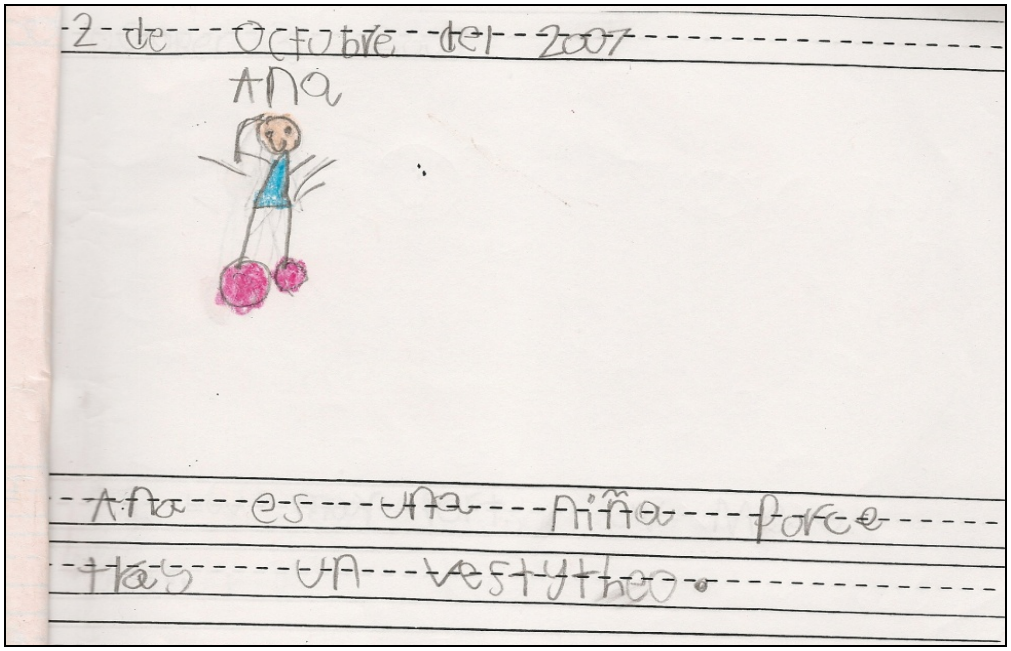
"I lick (like) the afubet (alphabet)."

Figure 14. Lourdes: Speaking in Spanish but writing in English

Similar to Gort (2006), the findings of this study suggest that Spanish dominant bilingual children use their oral Spanish skills while engaged in the process of writing in English. However, Gort (2006) also found that English dominant bilinguals used their oral English skills as they composed in Spanish. Surprisingly, this did not appear to be the case in this study. For the most part, the English-dominant students in Faith's classroom attempted to write in their second language far less than their Spanish-dominant counterparts. About half of the English-dominant students (there were eight in total) did not attempt to compose texts in Spanish on a regular basis. For different reasons, Gerardo, Sergio and Juan (all ED) rarely wrote written texts in Spanish to accompany their illustrations. Sergio and Juan, for example, were just beginning to develop their conventional writing skills and focused their energies on composing in English. Gerardo on the other hand, was extremely advanced in his English writing skills

and appeared to be self-conscious about his Spanish writing skills. He almost never chose to write in Spanish during journal time and in the writing center. According to Faith, "Writing in Spanish was a challenge for him. I think it made him not want to try to write in Spanish. I always encouraged him to write in Spanish but I never forced him."

While some English-dominant students did compose texts in Spanish, there was little to no evidence that they used their oral English competencies as they composed in Spanish. For instance, two English dominant students, Leticia and Rosalva, regularly produced written texts in Spanish when the LOD was Spanish without speaking English. In my observations, I noted that Rosalva's peer interactions were minimal when she composed Spanish texts and that she used her developing Spanish skills during her brief exchanges with those around her. While I did find instances of her speaking a combination of English and Spanish with her peers as she worked on her compositions, the written texts that resulted were not in Spanish. Leticia also composed quietly and independently, interacting minimally with the students around her (Field note, 10/2/07). The following journal entry was created by Leticia in Spanish. As she composed this particular text, Leticia worked silently as her peers talked nonstop around her.



"Ana es una niña porce (porque) tray (trae) un vestytheo (vestido)." (*Ana is a girl because she has a dress*.)

Figure 15. Leticia: Writing in Spanish without assistance

A rather unexpected finding in this study is that some English dominant students used their developing oral Spanish skills in their conversations with peers while engaged in the process of writing English. The data showed that students' desire to interact with their peers throughout the process of composing encouraged them to speak in their second language. In the following interaction, Javier (ED) decides to speak Spanish with his Spanish dominant peers despite the fact that the LOD is English.

Javier:	And that's the little boy that says, "Look! Spiderman!"	
Leonardo:	Spiderman no tiene *eyes*.	Spiderman doesn't have *eyes*.
Lourdes:	Si tiene.	Yes he has.
Leonardo:	Tiene *mouth* debajo de la mascara.	He has a *mouth* under the mask.

Lourdes:	Ni tampoco tiene nariz cuando tiene la mascara.	Nor does he have a nose when he has the mask.
Leonardo:	Ni tampoco la boca. Porque el Hombre Araña no trae boca. Tiene la mascara.	Nor a mouth. Because Spiderman doesn't have a mouth. He has a mask.
Javier:	¿Pero necesita la boca verdad? El habla.	But he needs a mouth right? He talks.
Leonardo:	¡Habla con la mascara! ¡Habla con la mascara!	He talks with the mask! He talks with the mask!
Javier:	(Forrows his brow as he speaks) ¡Pero tiene que ponerse su mascara! Entonces le voy a poner una. (pause) *No! This is George of the Jungle!*	(Forrows his brow as he speaks) But he has to put on his mask! Then I'm going to put one on him. (pause) *No! This is George of the Jungle!*
Lourdes:	¡Ay! Yo vi la película. La rente. La de *George of the Jungle.* (singing) George, George, George de la Selva.	Oh! I saw the movie. I rented it. The one of *George of the Jungle.* (singing in Spanish) George, George, George of the Jungle.
Javier:	(singing) George, George, George of the Jungle strong as he can be! *Y luego que se pego con un árbol. ¿Verdad?*	(singing in English) George, George, George of the Jungle strong as he can be! (switch to Spanish) *And then that he hit himself with a tree. Right*?
Leonardo:	¡Y luego hace AAAAA!	
Jasmin:	Yo vi Jorge el Curioso.	
Javier:	Yo vi *George of the Jungle* que hizo asi.	And then he goes AAAA!
Jasmin:	Yo vi Jorge el Curioso.	I saw Curious George.
Javier:	¿Jorge el Curioso?	I saw that *George of the Jungle* went like this.

	I saw Curious George. Curious George? (Journal Time, 11/2/07)

Initially, Javier is speaking in English. He informs his peers that he has just drawn a boy who says, "Look! Spiderman!" Leonardo, who is Spanish dominant, responds to Javier in Spanish. Looking over at Javier's picture he says, "Spiderman no tiene eyes" (*Spiderman doesn't have eyes*). Lourdes, another Spanish dominant child, joins the conversation and speaks in Spanish. Lourdes and Leonardo have a brief exchange about the physical characteristics of Spiderman. Here we see the peer influence reflected in Javier's oral language use. Javier is surrounded by Spanish-dominant students at his table so he changes to Spanish to join in on the discussion between Lourdes and Leonardo. Javier asks, "¿Pero necesita la boca verdad? El habla" (*But he needs a mouth right? He talks*). The conversation continues in Spanish. Leonardo informs Javier that Spiderman speaks with his mask. Javier, who seems flustered by his peer's comments, changes his mind about drawing Spiderman. He suddenly switches back to English and announces that he is drawing George of the Jungle. Lourdes does not acknowledge his switch to English and continues to speak in Spanish. Javier talks next and displays his bilingual competencies by using both English and Spanish in his utterance. He sings, "Gorge, George, George of the Jungle strong as he can be!" and then goes back to speaking in Spanish. He says, "Y luego que se pegó con un árbol. ¿Verdad?" (*And then that he hit himself with a tree. Right*) Leonardo corroborates Javier's statement and the children continue to converse in Spanish.

As the interaction between Javier, Leonardo and Jasmin comes to an end, Javier finishes his journal entry. An examination of Javier's journal entry provides clear evidence of how his interaction in Spanish afforded him opportunities to create a written text in English. In this particular case, something Javier said in Spanish during his conversation ended up as the cornerstone of his writing in English. Under his picture, Javier wrote the following text: Jorge uv the jungle hit jiz hed. Before he put his journal away, I asked Javier to read what he had written. Smiling, Javier said, "Jorge of the jungle hit his head."

Like their English dominant and Spanish dominant counterparts, the balanced bilinguals in the classroom (Alvaro, Alex and Cosme) also supported their bilteracy development through the oral use of both languages. I will focus on Alex to illustrate several patterns in the oral language use of the balanced bilinguals in this classroom. At times, the three balanced bilinguals used only one language throughout the duration of their composing. For instance, the following excerpt of dialogue occurred as Alex created a text in English during journal time.

Alex: All my friends are at the circus. And there is a clown. The clown.

Arthur: The clown!

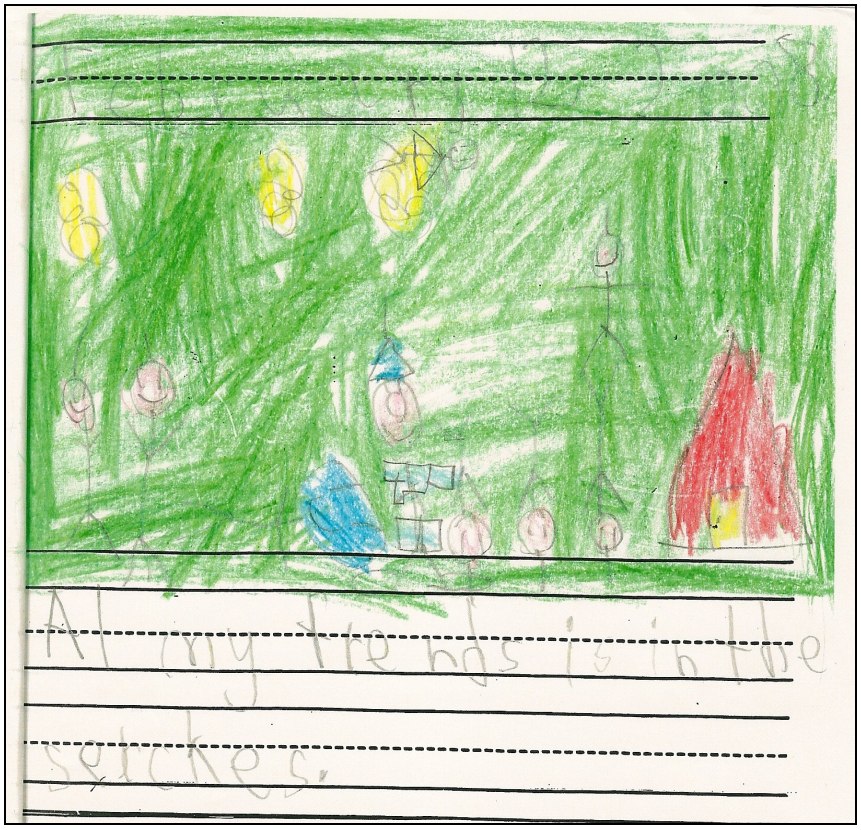
Alex: In the circus. That's where I want my friends.

Arthur: Why does he have one eye?

Alex: That's not one eye. Two eyes. One eye here and one over here. A nose. I'm gonna do his shirt. (Journal Time, 2/12/08)

On this particular day, Alex is sitting at his assigned table with Leonardo (SD), Lourdes (SD), and Arthur (ED). As the children begin their various journal entries, Alex chooses

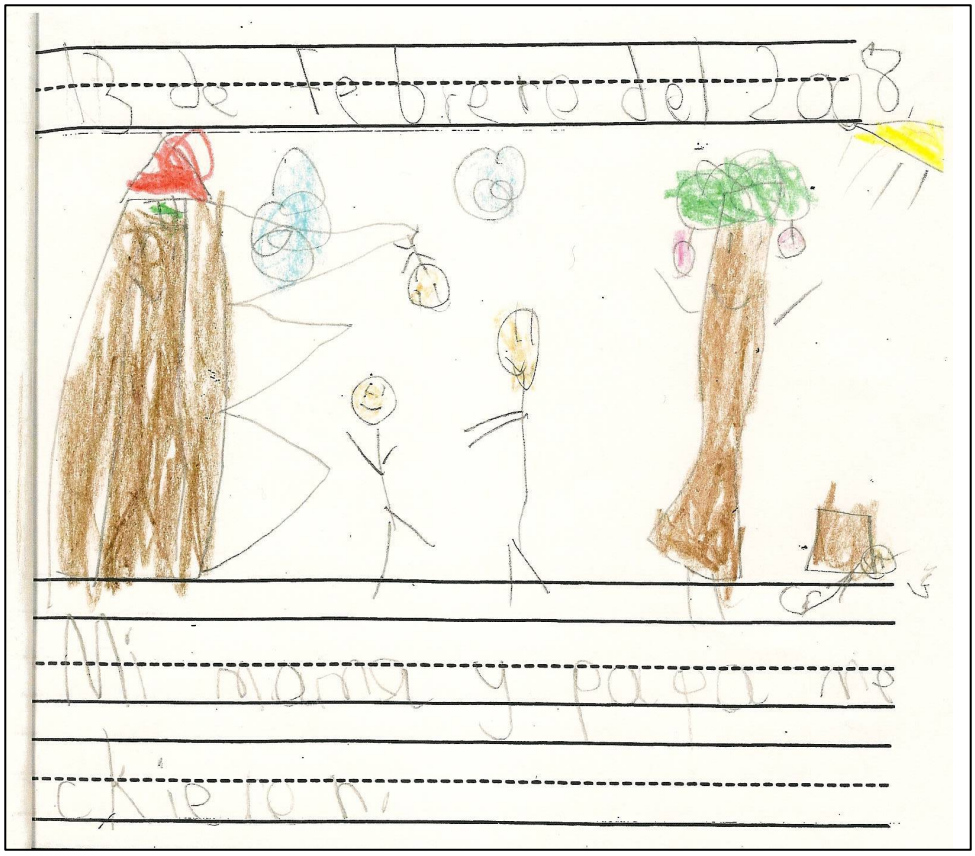
to speak in English as he writes in his journal. At the beginning of the interaction, it appears that Alex is not engaged in a specific conversation with his peers. Rather, he is commenting to the group at large about his drawing. Arthur, an English dominant student, responds to Alex's comments. This initiates an extended conversation that facilitates the creation of a text in English for Alex. By the end of his exchange with Arthur, Alex had created the following composition:



"Al (all) my frends (friends) is in the serckes (circus)."

Figure 16. Alex composes a text in English

Similarly, Alex also used his oral knowledge of Spanish to scaffold his writing in Spanish. The day after he created the text shown below, Alex spent the majority of journal time talking to his Spanish dominant peer, Lourdes, in Spanish. Alex authored this text in the midst of his lengthy chat with Lourdes:



"Mi mama y papa me ckieren (quieren)." (*My mom and dad love me.)*

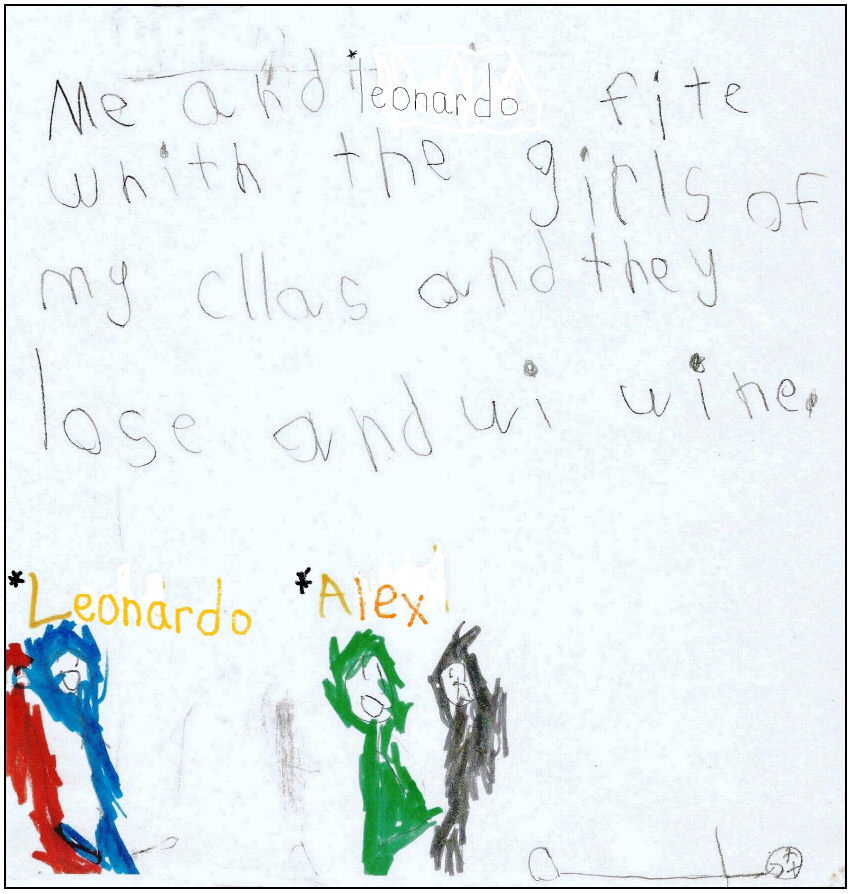
Figure 17. Alex composes a text in Spanish

Like his Spanish dominant and English dominant counterparts, Alex also drew from his language knowledge of both English and Spanish as he authored texts. On some occasions, Alex chose to speak in one language while writing in another. The next portion of dialogue occurred during an extensive exchange that took place between Leonardo, Lourdes and Alex at the writing center.

Leonardo:	¡Oye! ¡Vamos a pelear con mujeres!	Hey! Let's fight with girls!
Alex:	Si porque mi dibujo es de peleas.	Yes because my drawing is about fighting.
Lourdes:	Yo –	I –
Alex:	¡Déjame hablar! Yo voy a pelear con Leticia y tu pelea con Lourdes.	Let me talk! I am going to fight with Leticia and you fight with

		Lourdes.
Lourdes:	¡UUUUU! ¡Yo le puedo ganar a Leonardo!	OOOOO! I can beat Leonardo!
Alex:	A que no.	No you can't.
Lourdes:	A que sí.	Yes I can.
Alex:	¡Ay pues las niñas tienen miedo!	Well the girls are scared!
		(Writing Center 1/31/07)

With the assistance of his peers, Alex developed a storyline that went along with his drawing. Leonardo, a Spanish dominant peer, took on the role of co-author as the discussion progressed while Lourdes unsuccessfully attempted to do the same. Jointly, the boys created a story where they fought with their female classmates and defeated them. At the end of the children's conversation, Alex transformed their oral story that was created in Spanish into a written story in English. Below is his final written product:



Me and Leonardo fite (fight) with the girls of my cllas (class) and they lose and wi (we) wine (win).

Figure 18. Alex and Leonardo: A co-constructed text

Interestingly, there was no evidence that Cosme, Alex and Alvaro supported their writing in Spanish by using their English orally. While these boys could speak in English quite fluently, it appeared that they chose to do so only when composing texts in English. When writing in Spanish, the balanced bilinguals either spoke to their peers in Spanish or remained quiet as they composed at the writing center or during journal time.

As the children in Faith's classroom developed their biliterate capabilities, they exhibited different patterns in their oral language use. Like Gort (2006), this study found that the Spanish dominant children used their Spanish orally to facilitate their written texts in English. However, unlike Gort (2006), the English dominant students did not

speak in English as they attempted to compose texts in Spanish. A very important finding that does not confirm the existing body of research on the biliteracy development of young children is that at times, the English dominant children drew from their developing oral language skills in Spanish as they composed written texts in English. Their conversations with peers in Spanish afforded them opportunities to flesh out their written compositions.

The majority of research that examines the biliteracy development of school-aged bilinguals in two-way immersion classrooms categorizes the participants of such programs into two camps – English dominant children and Spanish dominant children (e.g., Gort, 2006; Perez, 2004). At the beginning of the data collection phase in this study I realized that this dichotomy was problematic because there were a few students who did not appear to be dominant in one language or the other. These students were more balanced in their language use. That is, they communicated in both English and Spanish quite effortlessly. In this particular context, the three boys that were balanced in their language use relied on their Spanish speaking skills when composing both English and Spanish texts. They only appeared to use their English orally when they attempted to write in English.

Chapter Summary

As the children in Faith's classroom engaged in the composing process, they were free to choose the language that they wanted to use in their face-to-face interactions and in their written compositions. In this particular two-way immersion classroom the children did not have to adhere to the language day when they composed. Consequently, there were various factors that influenced the children's decision to use their developing

linguistic skills in English and Spanish. As suggested by Hymes (1964), the form of a verbal message in any speech event is directly affected by the participants (speakers, addressees and audience) the ecological surroundings and the topic or range of topics. The data presented in this chapter showed that the students' oral language use was influenced by their comfort level, the peer group and outside context.

According to Dworin (2003), "One of the main areas for further research in this area [biliteracy] is to explore the ways in which the development of both languages affects oral and written language use among elementary school students in academic contexts" (p. 183). The findings in this chapter showed that as the children in Faith's classroom developed their writing skills in both English and Spanish, they tapped into their oral communication skills to scaffold their biliteracy learning. These children relied heavily on their interactions with peers to support their writing and appeared to use their developing skills in both English and Spanish intentionally. Both Spanish dominant children and those children who were balanced in their language use drew on Spanish to support their writing in English while English dominant students tapped into their Spanish speaking capabilities to support their writing in English.

Conclusion

The findings in this study described the social activity of bilingual kindergarten writers in a two-way bilingual immersion classroom. These findings were divided into three chapters, each of which focused on a unique aspect of the young writers' social endeavors. Using excerpts of students' verbal exchanges, Chapter Four illustrated the complex nature of student interactions. In particular, this chapter reported on the various kinds of interactions that occurred between young writers as they created written/drawn

texts. Chapter Five examined the connections between students' interactions and the actual products that were being produced in the midst of their talk. Two cases were presented, each demonstrating a unique relationship between the interlocutors and the written texts that they created. Finally, in Chapter Six, children's oral language took center stage. This chapter reported on participants' use of English and Spanish throughout the composing process. But what is gained by understanding the social activity of young bilingual writers in a two-way immersion classroom? In the final chapter of my dissertation, I seek to provide the answer to this question as well as answers to the research questions that guided my study.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

While many other studies have examined the social activity of young writers in various early childhood settings (e.g., Bomer and Laman 2004; Dauite and Dalton, 1993; Dyson, 1989, 1992; Rowe, 1994, 2008) this study differed in that it described the peer interactions of bilingual children in a unique setting – a two-way immersion classroom. As expressed by Dworin (2003), "Much of the work on bilingual education, however, suffers from applying to bilingual situations research and instructional practices drawn from work conducted with English monolinguals with little appreciation that there may be important differences" (p. 174). Consequently, the purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of the nature of bilingual kindergarten children's interactions as they explored written language in their TWI classroom. The following three research questions guided both data collection and analysis:

1. In what ways do bilingual kindergarten children interact with their peers as they compose written texts?
2. How are peer interactions related to students' written products?
3. What oral language is associated with these peer interactions?

While interrelated, the research questions focus on distinct aspects of children's social activity. Guided by a socioconstructivist perspective on literacy development and a "wholistic" view of bilingualism, the following discussion will relate findings to the current research in the field of early childhood literacy and bilingual education. The chapter will be divided into the following sections: the complex nature of young bilingual writers' interactions, the significance of bilingual writers' interactional histories, the bilingual fluidity of children's language use and expanding resources for literacy

learning. I will conclude with limitations of this study and implications for practice and research.

The Complex Nature of Young Bilingual Writers' Interactions

The existing body of research suggests that when given the opportunity, young monolingual children spend a considerable amount of time interacting with their peers throughout the composing process (Bomer & Laman 2004; Dauite and Dalton, 1993; Dyson, 1989, 1992; Larson, 1999; Rowe, 1994, 2008). Like their monolingual counterparts, the young bilingual writers in this study also spent a substantial portion of time conversing with their peers as they attempted to create written texts. As reported in Chapter Four, analysis of the data revealed that the students in Faith's classroom engaged in the following kinds of interactions as they composed alongside their peers: (a) *display of capabilities*, characterized by instances where students exhibited their knowledge and skills by assisting other students and by enforcing teacher expectations; (b) *negotiating social status*, characterized by instances where students established solidarity with one another and/or engaged in power plays; (c) *discussion of unmentionable topics*, characterized by occasions in which students tackled issues that were "off limits" in the official school world and (d) *play*, characterized by instances where students participated in games, explored concrete literacy tools and engaged in pretend scenarios with their peers. While the social interactions that occurred in this particular TWI classroom were similar to what has been reported in the existing literature, the findings in this study also suggest that young bilingual writers' interactions are more complicated than those of young monolingual writers. Specifically, their capacity to communicate in more than one language added another layer of complexity to their interactions. Unlike monolingual

students, the children in Faith's classroom weaved in and out of social worlds that were defined in part by the language and/or languages that were being spoken. In order to participate in these multiple worlds, the children had to draw on their entire linguistic repertoire (both Spanish and English) as well as differentiated social understandings. In addition to the various positions children assumed and assigned each other through their talk, the children also took on the role of linguist; they made purposeful decisions about how and when they used both English and Spanish in their interactions at the writing center and during journal time. This positioning afforded the students opportunities to interact in ways that were different than what has been written about in previous research.

Of significance is the fact that the young writers in this study interacted in ways that solidified children's image of themselves and each other as bilingual speakers of two languages and prevented what Lee et al. (2008) referred to as "a thickening of identities" of the students as speakers of either English or Spanish (p. 90). This seems to be the major answer to research question one of this study. As reported in Chapter Four, face-to-face interactions during journal time and at the writing center created opportunities for students to display their multi-faceted capabilities. One way children demonstrated their knowledge and skills was by providing assistance to their classmates. Unlike Lee et al. (2008), this study indicated that the majority of the children in Faith's classroom did not appear to use the assumed language proficiency of their peers to determine whether or not they asked for and/or provided assistance. Spanish dominant children often solicited assistance from their English dominant counterparts and vice versa. Consequently, these kinds of interactions afforded opportunities for children to display their literate

capabilities in their "less developed" language. Reconsider the following interaction that was presented in Chapter Four:

Leonardo:	¿Me le escribes paraíso?	Will you write *paraíso* for me?
Javier:	¿Paraíso?	Paradise?
Leonardo:	Si. Paraíso en Español.	Yes. Paradise in Spanish.
Javier sounds out the word *paraíso* several times and attempts to write it on Leonardo's page. Leonardo looks over at Javier.		
Leonardo:	No escribiste paraíso. No escribiste paraíso.	You didn't write paradise. You didn't write paradise.
Javier:	Si.	Yes.
Leonardo:	¿Donde? No lo veo. Pa-ra-iso.	Where? I don't see it. Pa-ra-dise.
^^^		
Leonardo:	Mi cuento se llama "Paraíso." Mi cuento se llama paraíso. Le puse una pelota pero no necesitaba personas. Le puse una pelota y un árbol y nubes verdes y una estrellita me la puso Javier. También escribió pa-ra-i-so.	My story is called "Paradise." My story is called "Paradise." I put a ball but it didn't need people. I put a ball and a tree and green clouds and Javier put a little star for me. He also wrote pa-ra-dise.
		(Writing Center,10/10/07)

In this particular exchange, Leonardo asked Javier to write the Spanish word *paraíso* (paradise). Javier, who is an English dominant student, did not appear to be phased by the request to write in Spanish. He willingly took on the challenge and sounded out the word *paraíso*, syllable by syllable, in order to figure out how to spell the word. By demonstrating his literate capabilities in Spanish, Javier was able to move beyond his fragmented role as an English speaker and into a more fluid position as a bilingual

speaker of both English and Spanish. This repositioning was extremely important because it expanded the interactional landscape for Javier. It opened up opportunities for him to engage in meaningful interactions with other Spanish-speaking peers which appeared to contribute to the continued development of his oral language skills in that particular language. According to research on second language acquisition, social interactions that afford access to comprehensible input as well as opportunities to produce comprehensible output and negotiate meaning are crucial to the development of language skills (Krashen, 1982; Swain, 1985; Lee et al., 2008).

Continual interactions with Spanish-speaking peers were also an important aspect of Javier's biliteracy learning. Like other English dominant children in this class, Javier drew from his entire linguistic repertoire as he composed written texts. By doing so, Javier expanded his resources for thinking (Dworin, 2003); this point will be elaborated in a section below. Specifically, Javier supported his writing in English by speaking in Spanish with his peers. For instance, about three weeks after the above interaction took place, Javier engaged in another interaction with Leonardo and another Spanish dominant peer, Lourdes. This interaction was presented in Chapter Six. The bolded text signifies Javier's utterances in Spanish.

Javier:	And that's the little boy that says, "Look! Spiderman!"	
Leonardo:	Spiderman no tiene eyes.	Spiderman doesn't have eyes.
Lourdes:	Si tiene.	Yes he has.
Leonardo:	Tiene mouth debajo de la mascara.	He has a mouth under the mask.

Lourdes:	Ni tampoco tiene nariz cuando tiene la mascara.	Nor does he have a nose when he has the mask.
Leonardo:	Ni tampoco la boca. Porque el Hombre Araña no trae boca. Tiene la mascara.	Nor a mouth. Because Spiderman doesn't have a mouth. He has a mask.
Javier:	**¿Pero necesita la boca verdad? El habla.**	**But he needs a mouth right? He talks.**
Leonardo:	¡Habla con la mascara! ¡Habla con la mascara!	He talks with the mask! He talks with the mask!
Javier:	**(**Forrows his brow as he speaks) **¡Pero tiene que ponerse su mascara! Entonces le voy a poner una.** (pause) No! This is George of the Jungle!	(Forrows his brow as he speaks) **But he has to put on his mask! Then I'm going to put one on him.** (pause) No! This is George of the Jungle!
Lourdes:	¡Ay! Yo vi la película. La rente. La de *George of the Jungle*. (singing) George, George, George de la Selva.	Oh! I saw the movie. I rented it. The one of George of the Jungle. (singing in Spanish) George, George, George of the Jungle.
Javier:	(singing) George, George, George of the Jungle strong as he can be! **Y luego que se pego con un árbol. ¿Verdad?**	(singing in English) George, George, George of the Jungle strong as he can be! (switch to Spanish) **And then that he hit himself with a tree. Right?**
Leonardo:	¡Y luego hace AAAAA!	And then he goes AAAA!
Jasmin:	Yo vi Jorge el Curioso.	I saw Curious George.
Javier:	**Yo vi George of the Jungle que hizo asi.**	**I saw that George of the Jungle went like this**.
Jasmin:	Yo vi Jorge el Curioso.	I saw Curious George.

Javier: **¿Jorge el Curioso?**	**Curious George?** (Journal Time, 11/2/07)

An examination of Javier's journal entry provided clear evidence of how his interaction with Spanish dominant children afforded him opportunities to create a written text in English. In this case, something Javier said during his conversation ended up as the cornerstone of his writing in English. During one of his turns at talk Javier began to sing the theme song for the movie *George of the Jungle* and then switched to Spanish and said, "Y luego que se pego con un árbol…" This utterance, which translates to "And then he hit himself with a tree," was exactly what he decided to write about in his journal. Under his picture, Javier wrote the following text: Jorge uv the jungle hit jiz hed. Before he put his journal away, I asked Javier to read what he had written. Smiling, Javier said, "Jorge of the jungle hit his head." To conclude this section, the complexity of young bilingual children's interactions can be described in terms of their images of themselves as bilingual speakers and the bilingual support for biliteracy learning.

The Significance of Bilingual Writers' Interactional Histories

Another aim of this study was to examine the connections between bilingual children's interactions and the final products that were being created in the midst of their spontaneous talk. As mentioned in Chapter Five, initial reviews of the data suggested that while all of the children interacted with all of their tablemates on different occasions, the children tended to favor some peers over others. Over time, children's relationships with their "preferred" peers were solidified and interactional patterns were established. The

findings of this inquiry indicate that children's final written/drawn products were impacted not only by the immediate interactions that were going on as children were composing, but they were also influenced by children's previous encounters with peers. This appears to be the major answer to research question two. That is, their interactional histories with one another significantly influenced their written/drawn compositions. Two cases were presented in order to demonstrate the nuances of student interactions and how over time, these subtleties established interactional patterns that clearly shaped students' written products in distinct ways. One case focused on the spontaneous interactions of two children – Lourdes, who was Spanish dominant and Alex, a child who was more balanced in his language use. Both Lourdes and Alex established an amicable relationship that met their needs as bilingual writers. For the most part, these two students engaged in the kinds of interactions that have been described in the existing research (e.g., Dyson, 1989). Their interactional history shaped their written/drawn products in the following ways: they assisted each other with their writing (spelling for example), planned and revised their writing topics and constructively critiqued each others' work.

The other case focused on the face-to-face interactions of two students whose language proficiency was different. Leonardo was Spanish dominant while Victor was an English dominant child. When examined in isolation, some of Leonardo and Victor's interactions did not appear to be beneficial or conducive to the composing process. The children's interactions were argumentative, combative and were not characteristic of the kinds of peer interactions that have been reported about in most of the literature on young children's composing. However, when all of the boys' interactions were examined over

time, it was clear that their confrontational encounters created opportunities for literacy learning. The boys' continuous interactions afforded Leonardo and Victor the opportunity to learn about the multiple purposes of writing. In this particular case, the boys' interactional history impacted their written/drawn texts in a very distinct way. As the boys wrote in their journals and at the writing center, both Victor and Leonardo accomplished a variety of social goals through their written/drawn texts. These goals included: peer acceptance, teasing, assuming and assigning social positions and retaliation.

Also noteworthy is the fact that this particular case provided evidence that the boys' interactional histories created spaces for both Leonardo and Victor to strengthen their image of themselves and each other as bilingual speakers of two languages, rather than speakers of either English or Spanish. Victor's desire to engage with his Spanish dominant peer prompted him to step outside of his comfort zone and speak to Leonardo in Spanish. It also seemed to play a factor in his decision to write in Spanish even when the language of the day was English. For instance, when Victor used his written compositions to tease Leonardo, he chose to write his texts in Spanish. On the other hand, Leonardo did not hesitate to speak to his English dominant peer in Spanish. It appeared that Victor's status as an English speaker did not deter Leonardo from continuing to talk to him in Spanish. It could be argued that their interactional history guaranteed Leonardo that his English dominant peer would respond to his utterances even if they were in Spanish. The variety of interactions histories described in this study include not only the kinds of playful and challenging commentaries described by Dyson (e.g., 1989), but also reflect bilingual children's sensitive understanding of the language

use of peers. The interactions detailed in this study also appeared to be much naughtier than previously described.

The Bilingual Fluidity of Children's Language Use

The third and final goal of this study was to learn more about the oral language use of young bilingual writers. Findings reported in Chapter Six demonstrated that children purposefully used their developing oral language skills in both languages throughout the composing process. One part of the answer to research question three is that there were three factors that contributed to children's language use in this particular TWI classroom – comfort level, peer group and the prestige of English. These findings are significant for a couple of reasons. While the prestige of English appeared to play a role in the language use of some of the Spanish dominant children in this classroom, it did not dominate the interactional landscape of the children. In fact, the status of Spanish in Faith's classroom was relatively elevated. The data showed that most Spanish dominant students continued to depend on their speaking skills in Spanish as they wrote texts in both English and Spanish. More importantly, even English dominant children used their developing oral language knowledge in Spanish to support their writing in English. This finding was surprising, considering that other research has demonstrated how English can dominate the interactional spaces even in two-way bilingual immersion classrooms (e.g., Palmer, 2004).

As has been discussed throughout this chapter, the children in Faith's classroom appeared to make intentional choices about the language and/or languages they used both in their social exchanges with one another and in the written texts they composed. The children did not restrict themselves to speaking or writing in the language of the day.

Nor did they compartmentalize their languages when they explored written language alongside their peers. Unlike the kindergarten students that were studied by Lee et al. (2008), the children in this study did not appear to treat one another as a speaker of English or a speaker of Spanish. For the most part, their oral language use was fluid. The children crossed linguistic barriers in order to accomplish social goals or to meet their needs as writers. Most importantly, the data indicated that the children viewed each other as bilingual speakers (as opposed to speakers of one particular language). This is significant because it afforded children opportunities to practice their productive language. Also significant is that the fluidity of children's language use also supported their biliteracy development. Following is the second part of the answer to research question three.

Expanding Resources for Literacy Learning

Similar to Gort (2006), this inquiry found that the children often used both of their languages as they created written texts. Frequently, the young bilinguals in this study spoke in one language while they wrote in the other. However, the patterns in children's use of both languages during the composing process varied significantly from what has been reported by Gort (2006). In this particular TWI classroom, the Spanish language was used as support for writing in English by all three groups of writers - Spanish dominant children, English dominant children and children who were more balanced in their language use. For these children, being able to draw from their developing knowledge of both English and Spanish throughout the composing process amplified their resources for thinking and literacy learning (Dworin, 2003). For example, using their more developed language orally provided opportunities for the Spanish dominant

children to tease out their storylines and characters before they attempted to write in English. They were also able to revise their writing and/or drawings as they received input from other Spanish-speaking peers. Likewise, English dominant children expanded their resources for thinking by using their Spanish orally as they wrote in English. Their conversations with Spanish-speaking peers gave them opportunities to brainstorm about their writing topic and afforded them a chance to modify their written/drawn texts.

Limitations of the Research

This study suffered from most of the typical limitations that are characteristic of qualitative inquiry. Foremost, the findings of this research study may not generalize to other settings. However, I have attempted to provide a rich description of the unique classroom context so that the reader can make decisions about the comparability of this setting to other settings. Thus, while generalizability of findings is not appropriate in qualitative studies, efforts have been made to increase the transferability of these findings.

Another limitation of this research is related to the use of video recording as a method for collecting data. When using a video camera to collect data, the researcher must decide who and/or what to focus on. During the second phase of my study, my sampling was representative. That is, I video recorded a different group of students each day. During Phase Three, my sampling techniques changed and I purposefully selected one group of students and recorded their interactions over an extended period of time. My sampling decisions afforded me opportunities to collect data that would answer my research questions. However, inevitably, it provided only a narrow picture of the social activity of the young writers in this study.

Implications for Future Research

There is a lack of research on the social activity of young bilingual writers in bilingual classroom settings. Consequently, this study reported on the peer interactions of bilingual kindergarten writers in a 50/50 two-way bilingual immersion classroom. While this study aimed to fill this gap, more research in this area is needed. Researchers may want to examine the peer interactions of bilingual kindergarten writers in other bilingual settings (a 90/10 two-way immersion classroom, a transitional bilingual education classroom and/or a developmental/late-exit bilingual classroom) looking for patterns and variations of the themes found in this study. Another recommendation would be to examine the social activity of bilingual writers in other early childhood grades (e.g., second grade). Again, this type of investigation would help to confirm the findings of this dissertation study or highlight differences.

As seen in this particular classroom, student interactions at the writing center and during journal time were shaped in part by the official classroom world that was established by Faith. The language policy she enacted as well as the pedagogical techniques she used afforded opportunities for her students to interact in ways that have been illustrated in this study. However, not all bilingual teachers create an official world that provides opportunities for children to draw on their bilingual and biliterate capabiltieis as they engage in the process of composing. Nor do all teachers tolerate (let alone embrace) the playful encounters of young writers as they engage in spontaneous interactions with their peers. As mentioned in Chapter Three, I purposefully selected Faith's classroom as my research site precisely because she established an environment where children could explore written language alongside their peers. Consequently,

researchers may want to explore both the social activity and the language use of young bilingual writers in classrooms where teachers have established language policies and pedagogical practices unlike Faith's.

Third, while some researchers have examined different aspects of bilingual children's oral language use (e.g., Delgado-Larocco 1998; Lee et al. 2008; Palmer 2004; Reyes 2001) there is a lack of research that focuses exclusively on the language that is used by bilingual writers in two-way bilingual immersion classrooms. Researchers may want to continue to study various aspects of young bilingual writer's talk. One facet of bilingual children's language use that deserves further scrutiny is their use of both English and Spanish in face-to-face interactions. Like Gort (2006), this study found that young bilingual writers drew from their developing knowledge base of both English and Spanish in the process of creating texts. However, patterns in the language use of bilingual writers in this study differed from what was reported by Gort (2006). These differences are significant and must be further explored in other TWI classrooms.

Another aspect of young bilingual writers' discourse that needs more attention is the dominance of English (or lack of) in their spontaneous interactions. While the prestige of English appeared to play a role in the language use of some of the Spanish dominant children in this study, it did not dominate the interactional landscape of the children. The data demonstrated that Spanish dominant continued to depend on their speaking skills in Spanish as they wrote texts in both English and Spanish. Even English dominant children used their developing oral language knowledge in Spanish to support their writing in English. The elevated status of Spanish in this particular TWI classroom was surprising, considering the fact that the classroom teacher did not rigidly enforce the

language of the day during journal time or at the writing center. As articulated by Palmer (2004), "Without this attention to the language/power dynamic, even an ideal dual immersion classroom will suffer the consequences of a language/power imbalance. English will dominate such a classroom on many levels, both blatant and subtle, and in the end it will best serve the needs of its English-speaking students" (p. 202). Researchers need to further explore the sociolinguist environment established by teachers in TWI classrooms and how the status of both languages is played out as children explore written language alongside their peers.

Finally, researchers may also want to conduct studies on the social activity of young bilingual writers where the classroom teacher assumes the role of co-researcher. During the last phase of the study, I began to check my interpretations of the data by watching selected video recordings of students' interactions with Faith. We met four times after school to debrief about the recordings. Before watching the videos, I emailed Faith transcripts of the recordings so she could write down her initial thoughts and perceptions about the children's social activity. During our face-to-face meetings, I began each session with the following question: "What did you think?" After Faith shared her thoughts we watched selected segments of the video together. I chose portions of the video recordings that contained representative examples of the analytic categories I had developed. I audio recorded our conversation that occurred as we watched the videos. I also wrote down key words or phrases that Faith used throughout our conversations that either corroborated or contradicted my analyses and interpretations. While this process was useful, I only used it as a tool to help me establish the credibility of my own interpretations. Faith's perspective – her analysis of the children's social

activity – was missing from this study. The inclusion of Faith's interpretations of the data may have provided valuable insights that could only be gleaned by a teacher's perspective.

Implications for Practice

Two-way bilingual immersion programs in the United States are designed to promote bilingualism, biliteracy, biculturalism and academic achievement to children with distinct language backgrounds - speakers of a non-English language and speakers of English (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). In order to create a sociolinguistic environment that is equitable and that promotes both the development and the use of both English and Spanish to all children, two-way bilingual immersion teachers are expected to use the deliberate separation of languages as a key feature of their instructional practice. However, recently, researchers have begun to question whether the strict separation of languages in two-way bilingual immersion programs is an effective approach for the acquisition of language (e.g., Arnfast & Jorgensen, 2003; Cummins 2005; Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 2005; Lee et al. 2008). As suggested by Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz (2005), the deliberate separation of two languages for instructional purposes appears to diminish opportunities for language learners to use both codes as resources to problem-solve. On a similar note, Lee et al. (2008) found that the strict separation of language in dual immersion schools my limit opportunities to socially interact in and practice the second language. They argued that "…the ways in which language is used in the interactional space can shape the identity of students and teachers as a certain kind of language user" (Lee et al., 2008, p.77).

According to Maloch (2005) "It is important to consider both the events that we make available to students in the name of literacy learning and how these events capitalize on or discount students' strengths and views of themselves" (p. 140). Like Lee et al. (2008), the findings of this study suggest that teachers create interactional spaces in the classroom where both English and Spanish can be used interchangeably by all children for variety of purposes in order to reinforce children's image of themselves and their peers as bilingual individuals. In this particular study, Faith attempted to adhere to the separation of languages during whole group instruction and during most small group instruction. However, she believed that when children explored written language, they needed to be able to use their oral language skills in a more natural way. In our informal conversations, Faith repeatedly talked about the fact that she did not enforce the language of the day when children were engaged in writing activities. As articulated by Faith:

> I want children to become the best writers they can be. They have to have confidence in themselves and in their writing and that comes from letting them choose what they want to say and the language they want to say it in. What is more important? Making sure children speak in the language of the day or making sure they are writing? Some of the children need to be able to speak in their first language as they write. It's not helpful to them if I force them to stick to the language of the day. (Informal interview, 2/2/08)

While the children in this study acknowledged the language of the day, they did not adhere to it when they were writing in their journals or at the writing center. The data showed that the majority of the students were deliberate in their language use and were influenced by their comfort level, peer group and the prestige of English in the out-of-classroom context. As seen in Chapter Six, the children often used both languages in the midst of the composing process. While patterns in their language use varied, most of the children used their bilingualism as a resource to support their composing.

Final Thoughts

It is through participation in social life that children "adopt community definitions of authoring, including ideas about acceptable meanings, and ways of constructing text" (Rowe, 2003, p. 263).

This study has provided an in-depth look at the social activity of eighteen bilingual students in a two-way bilingual immersion classroom in South Texas. Rowe, Faith and the children in my study encourage me to continue looking at into the social lives of young bilingual writers.

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